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SOCIETAL EVOLUTION

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A Study of the Evolutionary Basis of the Science of Society

BY

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PREFACE

When, in 1915, this set of lectures was first issued in printed form, the principles seemed to me so simple and even obvious as not to need much in the way of illustration. That was a mistake, as experience has shown. This edition is equipped, therefore, with considerable illustration.

Most of the cases cited are contemporary. In the collection assembled in Sumner and Keller, *The Science of Society*, there are a great many illustrations of one or another topic in this book. A few of them are cited below; but, as they are largely from primitive life and might convey, wrongly, I think, the impression that the process of societal evolution here sketched is merely a primitive phenomenon, modern instances have been given preference. The aforesaid process is at work now as it has been in the past.

In a very true sense, this book belongs after, rather than before, the scrutiny of many cases. Where, as here, principles are stated and then no more than illustrated, the tendency, trained as we are in deduction rather than induction, is to assume that the author has merely conceived certain ways of looking at society — a few “bright ideas” — and then has set out to find supporting instances. If the evidence could come first, as in the case-books of law students, there might be acquired a more vital idea of the inductive process,

both in its laboriousness and in its validity. But as something has to come first, and as there is no place in a book like this for the long preliminary study of the raw materials, there is nothing to do except to set forth what the mass of evidence has taught the author, and then cite samples of the materials from which the conclusions have been drawn. The reader is invited to make use of the index to the Sumner-Keller volumes, above mentioned, in which will be found entries corresponding to the principles here to be stated and referring to groups of cases which those principles endeavor to set in order.

Beyond the introduction of illustrative materials, considerable change has been made in what was written seventeen years ago. I do not see in rational selection as much as I then thought I did; and the chapter on transmission has been rearranged. Such alterations have come out of the experience of teaching many classes with this book as a text, and also from apt criticism received from both undergraduate and graduate students, critics who have my deep appreciation. There has been added, in the Appendix, an article which, as originally printed in the *Yale Review* (to whose editors acknowledgments for permission to reprint are hereby tendered), bore the title, "The Perils of Enlightenment." It is for those whose previous training has disposed them to believe that any strictly scientific study of human society must lead to an "enervating fatalism."

Messrs. Henshaw Ward and George P. Murdock have lent me strong arms in assistance; and the Sumner Club, which has had a hand under my elbow

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for nearly twenty years, has procured for me the consecutive time needed for tasks of this sort. I am under a lifetime obligation to that organization and especially to its secretary, Julius C. Peter.

A. G. KELLER.

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October, 1931.

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SOCIETAL EVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTORY

ADJUSTMENT is the topic with which this book begins and ends. The craft of the printer is a good instance of adjustment. It includes a number of rules governing the general aspect of the printed page, and covering such technical matters as size, length of the lines of letters, separation of these lines from one another, and style and size of type. When these particulars have been skillfully attended to, the page is attractive and easily read; where they have been neglected or clumsily managed, there results for the reader a discomfort that runs all the way from vague irritation to positive eye-strain. Gradually printers have come to know how to adjust their pages artfully to the peculiarities of the human eye; they have found, by experience, that it prefers such and such type, lines of a certain length, spacings of this and that description, and so on. From such experience are evolved the printer's norms and rules.

It has been found that all eyes are pretty much alike, so that, in the great majority of cases, it is safe enough to abide by the rules; also that it is hopeless to try to make the eyes change their ways. The nature

of the eye is a permanent condition to which the printer must adjust his offerings; its muscles can readily accomplish certain movements without undue fatigue, while they quickly tire under the necessity of sharp focusings and over-long or over-short swingings across the page. Habit also plays its part in this matter; if we had learned to read equally readily from right to left, it is probable that there would be some easement in having alternate lines set in opposite directions. That we have not acquired such habits is another of the virtually inalterable conditions to which the printer must accommodate himself.

The organic world is full of adjustments to no less permanent life-conditions. Every plant and animal exhibits them. Books on botany and zoölogy describe the nice adjustments that occur in nature, so that the veriest amateur is fully aware of them. It is evident, of course, that they are not planned, as is the set-up of the printed page. The principle of adjustment runs, in fact, throughout the life of all things that have life. It dominates not only the physical form and structure of plants, animals, and men, but also the social forms and structures, the institutions, under which mankind live in human society. The outstanding types of institutions are the economic, the governmental, the religious, and the marital. Every detail of these systems represents an adjustment to specific life-conditions of society, while as wholes they are composite adjustments to several inclusive life-conditions, as follows :

The economic organization is an adjustment to physical environment, in the main, responding also

to the social environment of fellow-men. It deals with land, food, clothing, shelter, and involves an industrial organization in the combined assault on nature. It includes the development of tools, processes, technical knowledge, specialization, coöperation, competition, combination, and other instrumentalities for discovering the nature of the physical environment and, on the basis of that discovery, having always in mind the constant and immutable character of chemical elements, physical laws, climate, and so on, for adjusting human action so as to get the maximum of result.

Governmental organization is an adjustment mainly to the social environment of fellow-men. If they have to be fought, there is need of military organization, weapons, strategy, and technical knowledge, while the keeping of order within the nation calls for regulative organization in all its manifold forms. All such organization must rest upon a perception of the nature and habits of fellow-men, just as the printer's art must adjust itself to the nature and habits of the eye, though the printer has a much simpler, more objective situation to deal with.

Religious organization is an adjustment to that environment of spiritual beings which men have believed to be as actual as the physical or social environment. In reality, this is a recognition of the inexplicable and unpredictable element in life, as personalized in the spiritual environment, which is truly a life-condition of the first magnitude. The course of religion has been to discover the nature and desires of spiritual beings and to adjust to them, as a measure for preserving life, avoiding adversity, and winning prosperity.

The marital organization — marriage and the family — is an adjustment to the life-condition of bi-sexuality. The two sexes are given by nature, inalterably; the issue is as to how they may get along together best, and also rear the next generation. Almost every imaginable way has been tried, from the loosest of organizations up to the monogamic family.

These inclusive organizations, themselves adjustments to the broadest of life-conditions, are composite of vast clusters of minor adjustments, as the human body is composite of its organs and cells. It is with the idea of sharpening the conception of adjustment that the following representative selection of less comprehensive, more concrete cases is cited.

INSTANCES OF ADJUSTMENT

Take the familiar instance of crop-rotation. It involves, scientifically, a knowledge of plant-feeding. Of this the original crop-rotators naturally knew nothing at all. They merely concluded from experience that conditions were thus and so, and profited by adapting their action to them. It never crossed their minds that, as "lords of nature," they might pass some resolution against the conditions. They were glad enough to submit to limitations if only they were able to find out how to do so. The case was the same with artificial fertilization of the soil by the use of ashes, fish, and other restoratives.

The forms of money adopted by various peoples have been adaptations through employment of the convenient. If the characteristic commodity, which everyone knew and would receive, was tobacco, or beaver-skins,

or cattle, it became automatically the standard of value in the community. Then, since bulkier objects could not readily pass from hand to hand, as a circulating medium, the tobacco and beaver-skins were represented by wampum and the cattle by tokens, which at length came to be made of metal because the qualities of copper, silver, and gold were better suited to the purpose. Financial terms, such as "pecuniary" (*pecus*, a flock) or "salary" (*sal*, salt) betray their relation to the more unwieldy standard of value.

Economic systems, as well as devices, are adjustments to the facts of life. Specialization in labor, followed by coöperation, is one of the most successful of economic adjustments. It occurred between the sexes, the division of tasks being in accord with sex-qualities, so that hunting was, along with fighting, almost exclusively a man's affair. Then came specialization between masters and slaves. Division of labor allows for special natural or accidental differences, and its utilities include economy of time, effort, and material, at the same time providing a better product.

Hunting methods reckon on animal habits, which cannot be changed; animal and plant breeding count on natural processes of variation and heredity, of which advantage is taken, once they are perceived; manufacture, on the characteristics of bone, hair, wood, and metal; commercial methods, on the general distribution of materials, topography, natural waterways, and the race-character of peoples. The intricate complexity of marketing systems represents adjustment to original and emerging conditions which have to be met at the outset or as they develop. No one could plan the

whole network from the beginning; its growth is due to a sort of opportunism.

In the matter of ownership of wealth, especially land, a good many primitive peoples evolved a system of sharing, common holding, or communalism. To hunters land had no value as mere soil; what they needed was the use of the surface of a lot of it; and the same was true of herders. So they conformed to the situation as it stood, and held land in common. But when tillage came in, the planter and cultivator insisted on possessing a particular parcel of ground, in which he had sunk capital and labor, and private holdings came to be the expedient adjustment. Similarly slavery was of small use to hunters; slaves could not be equipped for hunting without being re-armed for war; so captives were either slaughtered or adopted into full tribal membership. By contrast, when agriculture on a large scale had developed, slavery became a valuable device, and, as in antiquity, was practiced as a matter of course, no objection being raised against it on moral grounds.

When there are no courts or prisons, there is no justice possible except a rough-and-ready sort, with heavy penalties. This situation is encountered by civilized men who have moved to the frontier; and the adjustment is frontier-justice and lynch-law. Also, where there exist no evolved agencies of discipline and regulation, those necessities are attended to by some strong, if bloody, despot. He is prized because he can keep peace and order; and his removal, as has been demonstrated, has resulted in chaos. An inexpedient adjustment for a civilized country, he is the best there is, and all there is, under rougher conditions.

The religious ideas and practice of many peoples have been criticized as superstitious, bloody, ridiculous, and horrible; but there is one thing undeniable about them all: they gave discipline to those who needed it, and also confidence, which is often more than half the battle of life. Fear of spirits kept men from murdering, stealing, incest, loose sex-relations, and many other socially undesirable actions, where any amount of abstract ethical reasoning and exhortation would have had no effect at all, even if understood. Further, religion was an adjustment that allowed leisure to priests, which gave them time to work out the beginnings of an intellectual heritage. They planned nothing such, being interested in their own welfare and prestige; yet automatically out of all this spirit-belief and magic were in time developed various arts and sciences, among them that of medicine, now prized so highly. Had it not been for the conviction that there was a spirit-environment, against which men could not prevail but to which they must try to adjust, it is hard to see how our vaunted civilization could have come to be.

Finally, by way of preliminary illustration of the adjustment-principle, there is the whole series of arrangements connected with marriage and the family. The mere sex-relation is in nature; the essence of marriage is the continued coöperation of man and woman under a customary distribution of tasks, rights and duties, privileges and immunities. Experience shows that close inbreeding among human beings is inexpedient; only backward peoples practice it; and we find that, though this matter could not have been thought out by savages, most primitive peoples prohibit the practice,

becoming thus better adjusted to the facts of life. Again, public announcement of the fact that man A and woman B propose to be man and wife is of interest to social welfare; hence the wedding-ceremonial. Property, passing one way or another between contracting parties to a marriage, has been found to stabilize the union; hence bride-price, dowry, and various other exchanges. Tests of man and woman, preceding marriage, prefigure the status of the two parties and of their offspring in matrimony; and divorce is a recognition of the failure of wedlock, the reasons for allowing a dissolution of the relation constituting a kind of post-definition of the status. Most accurately is descent reckoned and recorded in memory, for along with it go inheritance of property and succession to public office, two matters of the utmost importance to social well-being.¹

Because these illustrations of adjustment are largely taken from primitive conditions, it must not be thought that they occur there only. Readjustments of the economic system and of government are being proposed and tried all the time; churchmen are publicly or tacitly admitting that religion requires periodic refitting to changed conditions; and all sorts of criticism of marriage and the family as maladjustments are forever assailing the eye and ear. The presence and the need of adjustment in the social range are strongly felt, however inadequately understood. It is to a clearer understanding of adjustment in the social range that this book is designed to contribute.

¹ Details of the foregoing cases of adjustment are to be found in the four volumes of Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, *passim*.

EVOLUTION, THE EXPLANATION OF ADJUSTMENT

Adjustment of economic and political systems, of property, religion, and marriage, is on the face of it a complicated affair — much more difficult to understand than, for instance, the printer's arrangement of the printed page to conform to the powers and limitations of the eye. However, there has been one outstanding and compelling study of adjustment made — one which has withstood, so far as all essentials go, the critical scrutiny of seventy years. I refer, of course, to Charles Darwin's demonstration of evolution in the organic field. It is not as well understood as it ought to be that, as Romanes¹ wrote, the theory of Darwin has to do with *adaptations* in all organic nature, "whether they have to do with species or not."

Darwin explained adjustment to the satisfaction of the discerning, in a realm apart from, though neighboring on, the territory of our survey. No one is going to assert that the social scientist can take over forthwith whatever he wants out of Darwin. No one is tempted, any longer, to "reason from analogy" along such lines; for that has been tried by others,² with somewhat ridiculous results. No thoughtful student of society hopes to rival the natural scientist in the accuracy and reliability of his procedure — though he may strive to acquire the attitude and spirit of such a man as Darwin.

For, on a number of counts, the natural scientist is

¹ *Darwin and After Darwin*, II, 161.

² Especially: Schaeffle, A., *Bau und Leben des socialen Körpers*, 4 vols. (Tübingen, 1875-77.) On arguing from analogy, Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, § 453.

fairly an object of envy to the social scientist. The former deals with things, gets verification through repeated experiment, sets aside unreasonable prejudice by definite proof, attains such certainty as to justify "prediction."¹ The latter deals with the elusive human factor, may not deliberately experiment, faces what looks like impregnable prepossession and tradition at every turn, and cannot in general arrive at more than a high degree of probability. Furthermore, natural scientists have a way of climbing by standing on each other's shoulders, whereas social scientists, much like philosophers and some historians, seem to feel that they must each begin at the bottom, and start off by discrediting their forerunners.² No doubt some such unlikeness in method lies implicit in the different nature of the two fields; but it is quite evident which of the methods is the successful one, and it should be the aim of the social scientist who senses the situation to align himself as much as possible with the more promising one.

Such considerations start up before the mind when one is led to reflect upon what evolution means to these two types of scientific workers. To natural science the discoveries of Darwin meant new bearings, a perspective, a unifying principle — and then the inevitable renewal of confidence and burst of eager effort. The idea of evolution shows no kinship with metaphysical speculation. It is no dogma, but a concrete, proved process, demonstrated in definite terms, and actually verified day by day in the incidents of scientific progress.

¹ Keller, "Prerequisites to Prophecy," in *Yale Review*, XX, 532, ff.

² Ward, H., *Builders of Delusion*, chs. XIII, XV.

This abundant and continuous verification, not "intuition," has lent it the force of a major premise. It is not a vague formula which aims to include everything — which is at the same time irrefutable and also useless for the further prosecution of scientific labors — but is to the intellectually curious both a cheering evidence of the success of scientific method and a tool capable of effective use in further discovery. Natural scientists mean something definite and actual when they use the Darwinian terms — variation, selection, heredity, adaptation — and they are helped to get somewhere by the clearness and significance lent to their scientific terminology as the result of Darwin's life and labors.

It would be strange if a set of conclusions like his, drawn from such a number of instances over several branches of natural science, should prove applicable only to the field of his special inquiry. The fact is that the doctrine of evolution has so held the interest, hostile or devoted, of the world, that its influence, or at least its terminology, has penetrated into regions quite remote from those in which Darwin labored. In a volume of essays in commemoration of the centenary of his birth and of the fiftieth anniversary of the *Origin of Species*,¹ notable scholars from many fields united in recognizing their indebtedness to the evolution theory. Here was acknowledged in generous terms its influence, for example, upon the science of language, upon history, and upon the study of religions.

The influence of evolutionary reasoning has reached out, then, beyond the house of its nativity; and it is undeniable that it has had its effect upon the social

¹ *Darwin and Modern Science*, ed. by A. C. Seward (Cambridge, 1909).

sciences. Still, no one can say that the evolutionary principle, as commonly viewed by the social scientist, whether economist, political scientist, or sociologist, affords any such orientation, perspective, unification, inspiration, and positive aid as it does in the realm of the natural sciences. It is an idea which he may accept as a sort of philosophy; it lingers in vague form about the horizon; it is invoked, from time to time, in a general and unproductive sort of way. It is a tenet rather than an instrument for the furthering of scientific knowledge, a thing to be discussed by way of formal logic and speculation rather than proved and used over and over again as a scientific verity. It is no tool of research. When social scientists have used the terms variation, selection, and so on, they have meant nothing definite and actual by them; their use of these terms has been vaguely analogical and has not helped them to get anywhere.

SPENCERIAN *vs.* DARWINIAN EVOLUTION

Probably this has been due to the impress set upon sociology by Herbert Spencer. In the natural sciences, not much is heard of Spencer; evolution means Darwinism. Most social scientists know too little of natural science and its methods. This is a pity, for it is peculiarly needful in dealing with social phenomena to keep the feet firmly upon the ground — and the ground is much more likely to be there, and to be solid, where experimentation is, where verification can be more positive, substantial, and unescapable, where it is a matter of observable, objective fact rather than of the balancing of ideas. Darwin cannot be too well

known to anyone who aspires to the name of scientist ; and the facts about his life, character, methods, and performances should be at the finger-ends, especially of the man who aspires to apply science to the study of human society. With all his brilliance, Spencer is really, for such a person, an untrustworthy guide. He has been passed upon by natural scientists, beginning with the illustrious group of his contemporaries. Huxley, and even Darwin himself, were familiar with both Spencer and his work ; and each, while marveling at his powers, virtually set him aside as a scientist. Says Darwin of Spencer :

“I feel rather mean when I read him : I could bear, and rather enjoy feeling that he was twice as ingenious and clever as myself, but when I feel that he is about a dozen times my superior, even in the master art of wriggling, I feel aggrieved. If he had trained himself to observe more, even if at the expense, by the law of balance, of some loss of thinking power, he would have been a wonderful man.” “I suspect that hereafter he will be looked at as by far the greatest living philosopher in England ; perhaps equal to any that have lived.” And, again, “I find that my mind is so fixed by the inductive method, that I cannot appreciate deductive reasoning : I must begin with a good body of facts and not from a principle (in which I always suspect some fallacy) and then as much deduction as you please. This may be very narrow-minded ; but the result is that such parts of H. Spencer as I have read with care impress my mind with the idea of his inexhaustible wealth of suggestion, but never convince me ; and so I find it with some others. I believe the cause to lie in the frequency with which I have found first-formed theories [to be] erroneous.”¹

Such was the judgment of Darwin. Huxley, a close friend of Spencer, used to poke fun at his “diabolical dialectics” ; his classic joke, about Spencer’s idea of a

¹ *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, ed. by F. Darwin, II, 239, 301, 371.

tragedy being the puncture of a grand hypothesis by a refractory fact, reflects the essential truth of the matter as respects Spencer's scientific attitude.

The fact of it is that Spencerian evolution is a philosophy. The author called it that. What he sought in the *Synthetic Philosophy* was an inclusive formula. Such a universal is not the aim of science at all. His formula states that: "Evolution is an integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion; during which the matter passes from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite coherent heterogeneity; and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation."¹ Who can refute this? Yet who can use it? It is doubtless true, yet the working scientist, impatient to be getting forward, will ask: "If true, what of it? To what end?" This formula, in comparison with the Darwinian factors, helps in no way toward scientific discovery; it is not the cloud by day, nor yet the fire by night. Rather it is like the vault of an overcast sky; it covers all things, but nobody can get his directions from it and fare forth. Similarly indicative of the philosophical trend of Spencerian evolution is the title given by Fiske, Spencer's "American adherent," to his major work: *Cosmic Philosophy*.

Further, the followers of Spencer generally come to identify evolution with progress. Whatever Spencer himself said or meant, this seems to have been one of the chief residua left after immersion in his philosophy of evolution. This view is not Darwinian. Darwin speaks of improvement sometimes, and also of retrogres-

¹ *First Principles*, § 145.

sion; but both were forms of adaptation to environment. That was the basic idea, and it was one which could be defined objectively, as progress cannot. Darwin was not much interested in pure inference. For instance, the idea, seized upon with avidity by those who felt the speculative spirit move, that all life came from one primordial form rather than from several — the idea of reduction of everything to a universal, again — was regarded by Darwin as a matter of little consequence. He was after something that stopped far short of a grand dogma or -ism, such as the philosopher yearns to establish; and this he found in the idea of adaptation. Optimism and pessimism, about progress or anything else, are alike impertinent when injected into science. But if evolution meant progress, then it was an optimistic philosophy, therein corresponding to the mores of an optimistic age of material prosperity. Hence, in part, the vogue of the Spence-rians.

“PROGRESS”

It is well to have this issue about progress and retrogression out of the way. By its etymology, “progress” is a “forward-going,” while “retrogression” is a “backward-going.” But what are “forward” and “backward”? As two human beings face one another, these terms mean exactly opposite directions; and if a third and fourth complete a circle, “forward” or “backward” means either north, south, east, or west, according to the position occupied. To a much larger circle, they could mean any point of the mariner’s compass. A New Englander and a Chinaman on opposite sides of

the globe, being asked to point upward or downward, would extend the finger in exactly opposite directions. Whether a direction is up or down, forward or backward, is all a matter of situation or point of view. Many Americans regard a protective tariff as forward-looking and progressive; others are sure it is backward-looking and retrogressive; and this, too, is a matter of station occupied and point of view. Fundamentalists know that Liberals are going in the wrong direction, not forward and onward, as Christian soldiers should; Liberals are convinced that the Kingdom of Heaven can never be reached by holding back. Progress is, in short, movement toward what some individual or group "thinks" is the "right" direction.

This is no kind of a criterion for science to go by. It is too variable. But there is a constant behind it, and that constant is adjustment. Protectionists and free-traders would agree that they were after adjustment, however much they might disagree as to means of attaining it. And so, without attempting to define "progress," which many able men have tried in vain to do, one is safe enough in speaking of "adjustment," and runs no risk of being accused of passing a moral judgment. "Adjustment" is a neutral, colorless, noncommittal term and its use does not invite heated controversy; it is also quite precise enough for present purposes.

If the student of the social sciences is familiar only with the Spencerian idea of evolution, he has a philosophy superior, in many respects, notably clearness, to other systems, and one not disassociated entirely from science. But he has at his service no such actually tested instrument as has the natural scientist in what

he calls evolution. Is it possible that he too should have recourse to the same efficient instrument? Is it not possible to extend Darwinian evolution into the field of the social sciences without sacrificing the essence of its value as exhibited in that of the natural sciences?

EXTENSION OF THE ADJUSTMENT-THEORY

From the side of the natural scientist, the efforts to extend evolution into the social range began with Darwin himself, and it was for him an unhappy project. All through his work are encountered suggestive hints as to the attitude of an exponent of evolution toward social customs and institutions, but when he attempted something more systematic, the result was deplorable. It is evident to the reader of the *Descent of Man* that, whatever the cause, for once in his life Darwin has been led to essay waters beyond his depth; the fourth and fifth chapters of that great book do not sound at all like Darwin. Because, in the interest of completeness, he was led to attempt the treatment of man's social qualities and institutions, Darwin in these chapters undertook to discuss such topics as the origin of the moral sentiments. This part of the book had better have been left unwritten, for, in default of the usual mountains of data from which he was wont to draw his weighty inductions, the great scientist was led to wander hopelessly among the unfamiliar and unfathomable quicksands of the metaphysical and intuitional.

It is evident that the salient features of Darwinian evolution are variation, heredity, and selection¹; and

¹ See Wallace's chart of the evolutionary process, in his *Natural Selection and Tropical Nature* (London, 1891), p. 166.

that out of the operation of these three comes adjustment or adaptation. These are simple and concrete terms, used all the time by the natural scientists. If they can be applied to social phenomena, we shall have the evolutionary factors carried over into the social sciences. On general considerations the balance of probability would be that a generalization so broad and so universally applicable over a large part of the field of science should not be utterly inapplicable over the whole. It should at least cast some light upon the processes going on in the rest of the field.

It is clear enough that the idea of taking the issue up as it is done here — of exploring the nature of social variation, social selection, social transmission and social adaptation — was suggested by the Darwinian system. These terms are in use in sociological writings. The analogy is obvious, and if the idea were merely to carry it out, a book like this would be superfluous. But the contention here is that behind the analogy lies a broad identity. There is a something in the social range which *is* variation (difference), whether or not it may be *like* what is called variation in the organic field; similarly social selection *is* selection (elimination), not merely *like* it. In the social realm, also, there is a means of transmission (securing likeness) having the essential attributes of heredity in nature; and adaptation occurs in one range of phenomena as in the other. These factors have their societal¹ mode as

¹ This adjective will be frequently used in what follows. I do not wish to apologize for it in any way, for I think an adjectival form corresponding to the noun "society," and signifying something much more definite than "social," is a present necessity in the development of a science of society. Some of the vagueness chargeable to sociological writing is undoubtedly due to the use of "socius" where "societas" is or should be the real conception in mind.

they occur in the life of society, just as they have their organic mode when they appear in the life of organisms.

The fact that certain factors of organic evolution, as, for instance, heredity, are inapplicable on the social domain does not alter the evolutionary character of social phenomena, provided that effective substitutes exist to fill the places of the absent factors. The trajectory of a projectile is still a parabola, whether the motive force be air, gas, muscular reaction, or torsion.

Any new branch of study suffers at first from the lack of a nomenclature. It is obliged to borrow from older sciences which are adjacent to it. There is danger here that its propositions may be only assertions of analogies or metaphors, that its terms may be personifications. Biology, having borrowed terms from the older philosophies and metaphysics, is still obliged to speak of "body," "creature," "being," "nature," and so on, which terms it has not yet had time to sever from their old connotations and reestablish in its own special use. "Anthropology" was used as a term in the metaphysical, theological systems of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries to designate the doctrine of man, as compared with theology, the doctrine of God. The terms already mentioned were employed in it and, for want of others, are still used. Biology borrowed from political economy the term "division of labor" and gave it back as organization; it took over the doctrine of population, as developed by Malthus, and gave it back as evolution. Such "analogies," if they were nothing more, are of high value because they suggest lines on which to investigate. Evolution is entangled in the same and similar terms; it seems impossible to sever, in the popular understanding, the survival of the fittest from the survival of the best. One alternative is to employ new, unfamiliar, and technical terms which are unintelligible to all outside the central current of science. All the familiar terms of this group of sciences are tainted by anthropocentrism, and in using them the writer is always aware that he may be communicating ideas which he would earnestly re-

pudiate, while to embark upon explanations and definitions would distract attention and interrupt his exposition.¹

If the salient and determinative processes of organic evolution are repeated in their essence in the life of human society, then we can say that there is such a thing as societal evolution and that we have some definite idea of what it is like.

¹ Sumner, W. G., adapted from an unpublished fragment.

CHAPTER II

THE HUMAN TYPE OF EVOLUTION

It has been said that man is "unchanged in a changing environment." If this is true, then he is exempted from that necessity of adjustment which weighs upon all other organic beings. Those who have subscribed to the statement have had in mind the absence of visible physical modification of *Homo*, over space and through time. They have been considering the essential likeness of the peoples of the world, dispersed as they are over all the varieties of earthly environment as no other animals have been; they have had in mind the fact that Egyptian paintings, on the walls of tombs, witness to little or no change in racial types during several thousands of years; they know that the relics of "fossil man" do not differ widely, comparatively speaking, from the form, structure, and proportions of modern skeletons. The likenesses between races of mankind widely separated in space and time are baffling to the classifier. Under the widest diversity of environment appears a striking similarity of structure. In short, the influence of diverse life-conditions and the passing of much time fail to show man much modified, physically, as the result of adaptation; so that, whereas other animals, ranging less widely, are classifiable into varieties, species, genera, and larger groups,

man is thought by many to exhibit differences no greater than varietal. Hence, as relatively unchanged under changing conditions, he is apparently exempt from the necessity of physical adjustment.

MENTAL ADJUSTMENT

However, if we survey the groups of mankind scattered up and down the earth, and consequently subject to the most diverse influences of natural environment, we find them differing widely from one another in ways other than physical. Even when we classify them on the basis of color or some other minor organic difference, we are thinking in the main of social qualities that go with color rather than exclusively of the tint of the skin.¹ We are thinking of their agriculture, manufactures, commerce, government, religion, system of marriage and the family, art, literature, and so on. These are mental reactions on experience rather than adaptations of a physical order. The fact is that whatever structural change has occurred in man during many ages has been in the brain, and that the rapidity and success of brain-adaptation has rendered bodily adjustment unnecessary, thus freeing man from the inevitable process as seen among plants and other animals, and as in them productive of physical characteristics available to botanists and zoölogists in their classifications.²

¹ "The true difference of mankind," says the Japanese Count Okuma, as reported in the *N. Y. Times* for October 4, 1914, "is neither in the color of the skin nor in the frame of the body, but is, if any, in the degree of culture itself. It is this difference that distinguishes winner and loser in the struggle for existence."

² There may be actual, measurable, structural changes registered in the brain, so that man is really not unchanged, physically, in a changing environment; as to that science cannot as yet specify.

At the present we are driven to deal with such changes, if they occur, by way of their results. Mental adjustment emerges in the form of ideas. Ideas are rather fleeting and tenuous things; but they are capable of being projected upon the world of things. They can be materialized or made real (realized). The complicated machine is the materialization of the brain-action of its inventor; it is not mere wood and iron. Here is a printing-press, an assemblage of steel, wood, rubber, printer's ink, and so on; you can feed paper in at one end of it and get a book, well on toward its complete form, with colored maps and other details, at the other. If two sheets of paper adhere as they enter the press, the whole performance stops until the error is righted. Iron arms reach out weirdly at the proper time, discharge some necessary function, and return quietly whence they came. The machine acts as if it had a mind of its own. Of course it is the mind of the inventor. Here is a watch which, as we say, "tells time," with a kind of an implication that it has an inherent capacity in relation to true time. It is a machine in which the elasticity, or potential energy, of a spring is used to run a system of wheels, and then this movement is adjusted to coincide with the movement of the earth on its axis. The materials of the watch are nothing of themselves, so far as telling time is concerned; they are effective only as they are formed and set in relation to each other and to planetary motion by the mind of the inventor.

Savages migrate into a colder region. Do they grow hair to keep them warm? No; they appropriate the fur that some animal has come to possess, as the result

of long-drawn-out natural processes. The lineman must climb daily one pole after another. He does not have to develop a climbing-foot, like the ape's, with the sole inward; he has attached to his foot a spike, set inwards, which meets his needs. The hammer is a harder fist, at the end of a longer arm; and cannon have extended the reach of a blow beyond the horizon, to shatter a target which the eye cannot see.

Every weapon, article of clothing, or other invention — each amounting to a substitute for some structural modification — is, in a very literal sense, an idea *materialized* or *realized*; and so are all systems and economies in social life: division of labor; trade and transportation; courts of justice; property; creeds and the cult; marriage-licenses, wedding-ceremonies, divorce-papers, and the accepted status of matrimony. They are all adjustments in living. None of them are in nature; all of them appear only in society. They are mental products, consciously or unpremeditatedly invented, by which groups of men adjust themselves to their life-conditions. The more of these ideas there are, the better the adaptability of the society.

“Property rights are not a fetish; they are an instrument of industry and commerce and are as indispensable as ships. Unless there can be an assurance of the security of these rights of foreigners, there can be no processes of exchange in goods or investment of savings. . . . Upon confidence in the good faith in these principles among nations rests the whole fabric of international life. These are not academic theories. They are questions which affect the life and death of millions of people . . . who are dependent upon international commerce for their daily bread. They are the economic foundations of relations that must be established with Russia, for they alone will make for her real reconstruction. . . .

All else is beside the point, except charity, which in the nature of things must be temporary.”¹

The stage in which a people is, in respect to the quantity and quality of its realized ideas, is called its stage of culture or civilization. The height of a society's civilization thus becomes a measure of its members' success in mental adaptation to the environment in which it lives. These adjustments, like those in nature, fall into a series of forms, connected, arising form out of form, with the elimination of some making way for the survival of others. If races cannot yet be classified as a result of inspection of the cerebrum itself, they can be assessed upon the criterion of the activity of that organ, in the past and present, as displayed in their cultural equipment. Hence the study of the course of civilization, or of that of one of its factors — for instance, religion — is as much a study in evolution as is the investigation of the phases through which general vertebrate structure, or the horse's hoof, has passed. The mode of evolution has altered; the process of adjustment goes on.

In such manner human evolution diverges from the general course of antecedent evolution. It is not correct, however, to say that all human evolution is mental, or that mental evolution is utterly absent in the animal. In evolution, there are zones of transition rather than sharp lines of distinction. “If,” says Darwin,² “it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed, which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications,

¹ Hoover, H., in *N. Y. Times* (May 16, 1922).

² *Origin of Species*, p. 174.

my theory would absolutely break down." Absence of transitional forms anywhere is enough to disconnect the course of evolution. In the case before us, and despite all the alleged distinctions between the operations of the animal and the human mind, it is evident enough, though connecting links between anthropoid and man are as yet but sparsely available, that what man has in the way of mind has developed out of what animals have, and not out of a vacuum.

SOCIAL ADJUSTMENT

Human evolution is typically of a mental order. It is also social. It is not of one mind, or a few minds. No civilization (sum or synthesis of mental adjustments) of any importance can be developed by the individual or by the limited group in isolation. There must be contact and conflict of ideas, that their variations may be sifted out and a residue of superior adaptations preserved. Civilization is a function of numbers and of the contact of numbers.

How mankind came to live in association is a question that need not be entered upon at this juncture¹; the fact is that human beings are found, in the main, to be living in societies of greater or less magnitude, and that the large societies have regularly been the most highly civilized. Culture is developed when the pressure of numbers on land reaches a degree at which life exerts stress on man. Life is too easy in certain "fortunate isles"; it is the competition of life that overcomes laxness and shiftlessness, by imposing labor, order, and

¹ Sumner and Keller, *Science of Society*, §§ 6 ff.

discipline, and spurring energy and enterprise. The first areas of developed culture in history were those whose natural conditions permitted of a relatively dense population: certain fertile river-regions of the Old World. Sparsely settled districts, even though they are politically part of populous countries, are backward in their cultural development. The way to become adjusted to the conditions of life is to confront them in concert with others, learning from their experience as well as from our own, and contributing to the joint fund of knowledge.

Upon this sum of mental and social adjustments which we call civilization mankind becomes as dependent for existence and comfort as animals are dependent upon their structural adaptations. A highly civilized man deprived of the appurtenances of culture is in something the same predicament as a slave-making ant without its slaves, or a bee without its honey-bag and sting. The race could spare the art of writing about as readily as a fish could get on without his fins. If all the books in the world should be destroyed in a single day, engineering projects would have to be suspended and all other large-scale adjustments given up until such time, at least, as the lost knowledge could be assembled again. This would mean severe economic calamity and much sacrifice of life. When a person whose life has been led within the artificial environment of high civilization appears in the rough setting of the frontier, he is out of his element and poorly adjusted, a state of things recognized in the epithet "tenderfoot"; his very existence may be dependent upon a pair of crystals to set upon his nose.

CIVILIZATION AS ADJUSTMENT

The development of civilization is plainly a great, added phase of adjustment, that is, of evolution. There is here a new mode of that process, one that supervenes upon its organic mode; it is societal evolution.

The truth that man has attained his most vaunted victories — his highly acclaimed “progress” — by clever adjustment to inevitable life-conditions, is to many minds quite unpalatable. It is more flattering to vanity to sing about how

“Mind is the power that moulds and makes;
And mind is man.
And ever more he takes the tools of thought
And, shaping what he wills,
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills;
He thinks in secret and it comes to pass.
Environment is but his looking glass.”

The fact that mind is not all powerful meets the same hesitancy of acceptance that afflicts one who revolts at the thought of animal ancestry or of the derivation of modern institutions from crude prototypes. “Mastery over Nature” is a ringing phrase; beside it, “Submission to Natural Law” seems tame and ignoble. Yet all man’s power over nature is secured by adaptation, not domination. Again, there are those who are prepared to concede that this may have been the case in primitive times, which no longer count, while filing large claims to present-day lordship; and yet brief reflection, if candid, will reveal modern men as powerless to alter the nature of things as savages ever were. “We are not, on the whole, freer from nature, when we

exploit her more intensively and study her; we only make ourselves more independent of particular eventualities of her essence and course by multiplying our ties to her.”¹ In our artificial environment, we have fallen under the dominion of natural forces which have no more pity than wind or gravity, and which scourge us with factory and tenement diseases, if we are poor and ignorant, and with “nerves” if we are not poor and are educated.

Many have acquired the idea that man need not adapt himself to environment, but forthwith molds the environment to himself and his desires. But we attain no power over nature till we learn natural laws, to conform and adapt ourselves to them. We can control those laws only by obeying them. Our lordship over nature consists in our degree of adroitness in learning and conforming. Judging by the increase of numbers among the civilized nations and the predominance of man over most other forms of organic life, the human type of adjustment is proved to be a successful one. But its success should not lead us to make a mistake as to its true nature. At last analysis, man is the helpless plaything of nature-forces: a little slipping of the earth-surface, and he and his handiwork are swept away. He can create no materials or forces, nor change the nature of those given in the situation. By putting together things whose qualities he has learned, he may effect certain transformations in materials; and similarly he may appropriate natural forces, such as falling water, to his convenience. He may thus surround himself with an artificial environment of houses,

¹ Ratzel, *Anthropogeographie*, I, 88.

paved streets, vehicles, waterproof garments, and so on. This looks like mastery of the conditions of life unless one penetrates beneath the surface and considers basic matters.

LAW OF POPULATION

If we align the human type of adjustment, as indicated, with that of plants and animals, we find them both representing methods of escaping the fatal sweep of natural selection. Plants and animals exhibit physical, structural modifications, while with man it has been, for many ages now, his ideas which have enabled him to oppose or evade the selective agencies — starvation, disease, violence — which would reduce numbers or would prevent their increase. Let us see how the two types work out as respects growth of numbers. Organic beings exclusive of man *tend to increase in numbers up to the limit of the supporting power of the environment*; to avoid disaster, when numbers reach the “saturation-point,” there is no immediate recourse save flight. The only way in which numbers may increase, in a given situation, beyond the then supporting power of the environment is through the development, under the merciless and protracted sway of natural selection, of some new structural adaptation.

In the case of mankind, however, the entering factor of rapid mental variation, along with selection from among such variations, brings it about that both flight and selective mortality may be avoided, for an advance in the arts of life — an invention such as the plow — allows of the extraction of more food and other life-necessities from the environment, that is, extends the

limit of its supporting power. A square mile will support far more tillers than hunters. Hunting weapons and methods, the technique of taming and breeding animals, the tools and processes of agriculture — these are samples of the arts of life which are the external projection of mental adjustment. Numbers may increase with any such improvement in those arts.

Further, through mental adjustment along another line, man can exercise a check on numbers which slows up their increase toward the danger-limit. In human breeding, quality can be preferred to quantity. A human group may limit its propagation with the idea of not sacrificing a certain level of living to mere populousness, or even with the still higher aim of attaining for fewer survivors a higher level, as yet purely imaginary. This sentiment of unwillingness to lower and intent to raise the quality of existence is known as the standard of living. Numbers tend to diminish as it increases.

The peculiar effectiveness of man's adjustment may be inferred from the clauses which, when it is a question of human beings, must be added to the above italicized rule about the increase of plants and animals: Human population tends to increase up to the limit of the supporting power of the environment (meaning, above all, land), *on a given stage of the arts, and for a given standard of living* — that is, for a given stage of civilization.

It is readily enough seen that where the arts are highly productive, population and the standard of living may be increasing at the same time, as has long been the case in America. The choice, however, is

always presented to the discreet as between quantity and quality, and of late they have shown an increasing tendency to prefer the latter. This means that the educated and well-to-do are likely to restrict numbers where the rest do not, a situation which appears to some as a perilous "breeding from the worst." In any case, it is the most cultured nations which show a declining birthrate; it is also the most cultured classes in those nations, and the most cultured families in those classes. For among them the standard of living finds its most favorable field of growth. The typical case is where parents limit the number of their children in order that father, mother, and two or three children may get more out of life in matters of health, leisure, peace of mind, schooling, and other costly things than any of them could have were the family to include an enlarged membership. A high standard of living is a mark of culture; nevertheless, even among savages there is something of the sort, as when infanticide is practiced on all children who are born before the preceding child is able to walk. The last clause in the preceding Law of Population holds, therefore, throughout society's evolution.

IS MAN "CONTROLLED"?

The very statement of a "law" having to do with the control of human beings seems to certain people to be an assault upon freedom of the will or some other pet tenet of a similar order. This is another exhibition of the vanity which is offended by the revelation of lowly origins and an ignoble pedigree. The philosophical dispute about the freedom of the individual will is not

considered here, for we have to do, in the study of society, with mass-phenomena; and, as Reade¹ has said, "While the individual man is an insoluble puzzle, in the aggregate he becomes a mathematical certainty. You can never foretell what any one man will do, but you can say with precision what an average number will be up to. Individuals vary, but percentages remain constant." Though this may be an over-statement, we are familiar enough in practice with the principle behind it. In fact, it is so well attested that large business ventures are based upon it — a compelling test of its practicality.

Consider insurance. No one can predict with certainty when a healthy young man is going to die, when a certain house is to be consumed by fire, or when a certain burglary will be committed. And yet the insurance companies are willing to bet a man that he will not die before a certain date, that his house will not be burned or robbed. They will even bet on the weather, and make money at it. Of course the way they do it is to compute chances — very many chances, masses of chances — and out of them derive expectations of life, conflagration, or burglary. Individual dying is a risky thing to predict; mass-dying is something on which to lay a safe wager and make money.

One does not know whether a rise or fall of prices will suspend or stimulate a certain individual's buying; but there is a law of mass supply and demand. It is also an accepted principle that bad money will drive good out of circulation (Gresham's Law); that hard times will be laid to the administration in power. One

¹ Reade, W., quoted in Doyle, A. C., *Sign of the Four*.

can reckon on such results when he considers masses of men, so that it looks as if mankind were controlled on all sides, in the social range as they are in the physical, by great, impersonal laws. This, as has been said, offends the wishful thinker, to whose method of thought Ward¹ has applied the descriptive term "thobbery," a word formed from the initial letters of "think," "opine," and "believe," and connoting indifference to verification. To such it is demeaning that man should be considered as limited and confined by impersonal law — not in the matter, be it noted, of a physical law, such as gravitation or osmosis, but within the social range. They prefer to think of him as master of his own destiny, ignoring and interpreting away such evident facts as mere history supplies. They like to think of man as "free," and the wish is father to that thought. It "must" be so because it "ought" to be so.

"I had allowed myself to fall into a habit of thought which led me to assume that my happiness or unhappiness was a relevant consideration in judging of the merits of the universe. The assumption is so common as to make us forget that so far from being proved it is not even plausible."²

If man's mental reactions and adjustments are conceived of as uncontrolled by impersonal law — as free in the sense of being capricious — then there is no object in trying to go on with the present book or, indeed, with any scientific treatment of society whatsoever. But it is known from experience that there are courses of action which groups of men are almost if not quite sure to take; that they are controlled in their

¹ Ward, H., *Builders of Delusion*, ch. XI.

² Hope, A., *The King's Mirror*, p. 282 (Tauchnitz ed.).

conduct even where, to the casual observer, especially if he has prepossessions, their course seems most clearly self-chosen. The reference to "laws" is not, of course, to statutes, but to sequences identified by repeated observation. It is imperative here to get down as near to fundamentals as possible, and try to reach some idea of the nature of these social laws.

SEX-CONTROL

Let us take an outstanding example of control. It will be admitted readily that sex-passion is one of the most difficult human impulses to manage. If it has been put under rein, certainly lesser impulses can be bridled. To an animal-breeder, human mating assuredly appears as a haphazard matter. He himself has spent years learning how to mate animals so as to secure thoroughbreds. "Not one man in a thousand," writes Darwin,¹ "has accuracy of eye and judgment sufficient to become an eminent breeder. If gifted with these qualities, and he studies his subject for years, and devotes his lifetime to it with indomitable perseverance, he will succeed, and may make great improvements; if he wants any of these qualities, he will assuredly fail. Few would readily believe in the natural capacity and years of practice requisite to become even a skillful pigeon-fancier." To such an expert, human mating must appear to be a process, or a lack of it, from which few thoroughbreds can be expected.

Even if, theoretically, the human animal can be bred, like other organisms, such artificial selection has never

¹ *Origin of Species*, pp. 27-28.

taken place. Though once in a while there has been some rough and temporary experimentation along such lines, it has not inspired confidence in any degree. The Spartans are sometimes cited. They specialized in breeding warriors, laying all stress on physique; but, as is well known among animal-breeders, there must be some sort of balance kept up between the single quality accentuated and other qualities — you cannot, for instance, breed a horse for speed and for size and strength at the same time. The Spartans succeeded somewhat; yet, as one student graphically put it, all they got in the end was a race of “brawny boneheads.” There have been reported, from time to time, isolated and temporary experiments, such as the effort to breed big guardsmen. Masters have bribed or persuaded underlings to let them arrange matings so as to produce superior offspring; slave-owners have selected the strong to propagate; but none of these enterprises has lasted on long enough to amount to anything. And, in general, men have resisted having their matings arranged for them, and public opinion has backed them up.

It is proverbial that “love will have its way,” that “marriage is a lottery” — the implication being that there are many blanks. Romance has settled heavily upon this range of life. Mating is supposed to rest largely upon personal choice, to be mainly a matter of chance — unless, indeed, it is determined by certain romantic, age-long “affinities.” In practice, however, those who are most sure that they once knew each other in Nineveh (“Set we not a sail in Carthage Bay?”) are not, in proportion to their numbers, meanly represented in the divorce-courts. The poetically inclined may go

farther in their resistance to the idea of control and sing in impassioned strain about how wrong it is to stand, puritanically, in the way of divine impulse; and there is a degenerate element abroad that would have society surrender all the rights that guarantee its interest in marriage and the family, property and inheritance, legitimacy and stability, in favor of the free spirit-movings of susceptible and impulsive individuals. If there is control in this range, it is evidently impersonal and unpremeditated, as it is in nature.

In Franklin's *Autobiography*¹ there is a passage recording his impressions of Moravian marriage, where there was a choice by lot between two or three equally eligible young women. Franklin remarked to his informant that such unions might be unhappy, thus controlled and not by mutual choice. "'And so they may,' answered my informer, 'if you let the parties choose for themselves'; which, indeed, I could not deny."

To those who have been misled to believe that restraint of natural impulses is deleterious, the following statement,² prepared by the British Social Hygiene Committee and adopted by the British Social Hygiene Council, in 1926, should be enlightening:

"(1) In the interests of the race and of the individual it is essential that the stability of the family in marriage should be preserved, and social habits and customs should be adjusted to this end.

"(2) There is overwhelming evidence that irregular sex relations, whether in married or unmarried, lead to physical, mental, and social harm.

"(3) There is no evidence either from physiology or from experience that for the unmarried sexual intercourse is a necessity for the maintenance of physical health.

"(4) There is no evidence either from psychology or from experience that for the unmarried sexual intercourse is a necessity for the maintenance of mental health."

¹ Ed. by G. B. Aiton (New York, 1912).

² *Journal Social Hygiene*, XIII, 513 ff.

Cases of possible damage occur under conditions of continued excitement; if the excitement is not present, there is no trouble. Limitation is always fully as essential as liberty.

It is even doubtful whether there is anything among humans such as the sexual selection which Darwin describes in his *Descent of Man*. There may have been once, when the girl who could, in competition, most speedily and efficiently hoe a row of beans immediately qualified in the eyes of the gentlemen-onlookers as a valuable helpmeet; there may have been some advantage in being handsome; on the other hand, the entrance of property-considerations might easily derange such selection, and the young woman with fat dowry was likely to marry early and bequeath to her offspring whatever she may have lacked in sturdiness or shapeliness. In any case, the question is as to what moved the masses of mankind, not æsthetic individuals, to their mating.

CONVENTION

The facts show that this matter of mating has been under the strictest kind of control — only the control was that of the impersonal force of custom and convention, of public opinion insisting upon conformity to existing societal adjustments. Fiction, specializing in the unusual and seeking to beguile the mind by representing things as they are not in humdrum life, has frequently represented happiness as the result of defiance of the conventional. The prince marries the pauper, and it is alleged that they live blissfully ever after. The barriers of class, religion, standard of living, and manners have been leaped and the pair has alighted,

on their feet, not their heads, in some paradise. That such an outcome seems edifying and exciting makes certain green, wishful thinkers believe that it must be or, at least, ought to be. Later they find out that convention is a tough adversary to challenge.

Scanning the facts, we find that, even in primitive times, the union of the sexes was surrounded by the most complex and compelling of controls. It looks, at times, as if savages spent most of their time devising restrictions upon sexual freedom.

By way of illustration: among the Masai of East Africa, "a man's son's son's son may not marry the man's brother's son's son's daughter, nor may a man's son's son's son marry a sister's son's son's daughter, but there would be no objection to a man's son's son's son marrying the brother's daughter's daughter's daughter or the sister's daughter's daughter's daughter. Likewise, though a man's son's son may not marry the man's maternal uncle's son's son's daughter, he may marry the maternal uncle's son's daughter's daughter. These unions are always contingent on the two parties not belonging to the same sub-clan. The rules of consanguinity and affinity which regulate marriage also apply to the sexual intercourse of warriors with immature girls before marriage and to the rights of hospitality after marriage."¹

The very terms "exogamy" and "endogamy" ("marrying-out" and "marrying-in" the group) recall to any reader of ethnography a multitude of detailed restrictions, the sense of which must be dug out by protracted study just like the sense of other provisions, in nature and society, which are the product of wide, impersonally acting laws.

Further, these primitive regulations are not child's play. They are backed up by the severest penalties,

¹ Hollis, A. C., "Masai Relationship," in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, XL, 479.

for they are not laws but taboos which, if they are transgressed, even in ignorance, are sustained by the full power of the ghosts and spirits. There are a number of statements from trustworthy observers that a savage who has unwittingly broken a taboo will lie down and die of fright within a few days; in any case, he is likely to be handled by his fellows with the ferocity of men who are themselves frightened on their own account, lest his transgression be visited indiscriminatingly upon the whole community — just as heretics were put to death, in a later day, by way of avoiding divine vengeance.¹

At the present time, departure from conventional behavior entails penalties which, though they may not be so thoroughgoing, are severe enough. They run from execution down through ostracism, ridicule, contempt, and other scarcely less painful visitations. Consider the attitude of society toward a *mésalliance*, even of a minor order, not to mention a flagrant case of miscegenation. The penalties of transgressing convention, even in ignorance, may be carried over to the next generation, thus with inevitable Hebrew ferocity visiting the sins of the fathers upon the children, who may bear, at least, the stigma of illegitimacy. The press now and then records the unintentional union of brother and sister; in such a case, there is nothing to do for it except for husband and wife to part forever, from each other and from their children, for no member of the family could endure the inescapable penalties if they should stay together.

¹ See Sumner and Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Taboo," "Group-solidarity."

Even if the regulations are senseless, the penalties are not the less severe. Witness the treatment accorded, in modern England, to a girl who has married her deceased sister's husband, and to the children of that union.¹ Yet there is nothing against such a marriage except a church taboo, based upon a doubtful scriptural passage. Year after year till 1907, the House of Lords reaffirmed this idiotic enactment.

The history of the Mormons is a kind of epic of sex-control enforcement; they fled repeatedly from conventional repression until it ultimately caught up with them definitively at Salt Lake City. In 1911 there was published an account of the tribulations of a man who, having invented a cult of "Absolute Life," was found to have in the temple of his cult certain young women who were learning to be "absolute mothers." Imprisonment was the form of discouragement which this prophet encountered.² There was once a Russian novelist who visited this "home of the free," with large spiritual and financial anticipations; but the reception-committee, which was to meet him at the dock, melted away when it was discovered that the lady he was traveling with was not his wife. His legal consort was home in Russia. The ensuing lecture-tour was pervaded with *contretemps* and even missiles, and the seer departed homewards under severe disillusionment as regards the New World. Freedom here did not, as expected, include all kinds of emancipation. Consider also the Victorian conventions which decreed failure and humiliation for a Parnell while they acclaimed the model of domesticity who sat upon the throne.

Certainly this supreme among the passions has been and is subject to control and direction; and the strongest and most compelling control does not lie in written statute, much less in personal edict, as anyone can see who reflects upon the topic, but in automatically

¹ Huxley, L., *Life and Letters of T. H. Huxley*, II, 231-233.

² *Absolute Life on Trial* (Chicago; the Absolute Press, A.D., 1911, A. L. [Absolute Life], 6).

developed convention. Convention penetrates where enactments are not ; and codified laws are no more than the crystallization of certain of the more tangible manifestations of convention. The power of this control lies, of course, in public conviction, which is the ultimate social force.

"Public sentiment," says Lincoln, "is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail ; without it nothing can succeed. Consequently he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes and decisions possible or impossible to be executed." As regards the liquor-question, Lincoln held that "all that kind of thing can be safely left to the common sense of our people. The remedy is education, not revolution. Slowly the people will have to set down all the items in the ledger of common sense that passes from sire to son. By and by some generation will strike a balance. That may not come in 100 years. Soon or late the majority of the people will reach a reckoning with John Barleycorn. If there is too much against him, they will act. You might as well try to stop a glacier by building a dam in front of it. They have opened an account with slavery, too. By and by they will decide its fate." Once more: "Our government rests in public opinion. Whoever can change public opinion can change the government practically just as much. Public opinion, on any subject, always has a 'central idea,' from which all its minor thoughts radiate. That 'central idea' in our political public opinion at the beginning was, and until recently has continued to be, 'the equality of men.' And although it has always submitted patiently to whatever of inequality there seemed to be as a matter of actual necessity, its constant working has been a steady progress toward the practical equality of all men." The struggle in 1860 was to discard that central idea and substitute another, tending to universalize slavery, as right in the abstract.¹

It is alleged, concerning Byron²: "The fact that he was the

¹ Stephenson, N. W., *An Autobiography of Abraham Lincoln* (Indianapolis, 1926), p. 127.

² Ludwig, E., *Genius and Character*, p. 229.

victim neither of political machinations, nor financial disaster, nor legal action, but that it was public opinion which pursued him, made his banishment permanent and complete, without the possibility of return." To this power of public conviction we shall recur.

That convention is of indeterminable origin, that it is made by nobody and by everybody at the same time, that it is therefore highly automatic and impersonal in nature and derivation, are contentions that need a few representative illustrations. Language is the most typical of all conventions; and one need only point to the fact that it grows up insensibly through generations, issuing at length into a structure, like those in nature, whose orderliness is discovered with astonishment and even awe by the scientific investigator. The impossibility of "making" a language has been demonstrated by the experimentalists in such manufacture; there is a parallel history of the attempt to introduce universally the metric system.

To take more trivial examples: where, for instance, or by whom, was the convention of turning to the right, in passing, invented and introduced? And who started the opposite custom? How is it that the Arab guest, wishing to express the utmost appreciation of hospitality, belches loudly after meat, while we, regarding all animal noises as vulgar, spurn the pellucid logic of his manifestation? Why do certain peoples sniff each other rather than kiss, regarding the latter as "white man's foolishness," and even as an attempt at mayhem, as when the negro native rose to protect the missionary's wife from being gnawed, as he thought, by her homing husband? Who invented the killing of the old, or their careful and respectful treatment? How

is it that some tribes pay bride-price for their wives, while others virtually buy husbands by means of dowry? Why do some primitive men think that stripped bones are repast enough for their women, and pitch them carelessly over their shoulders in the general direction of their fasting spouses; while in other societies the rule of "women and children first" prevails, not alone in a sea-catastrophe but in the ordinary course of events?

It is apparent enough that such customs, in their diversity, have grown up, little by little, as concretions; they have not been planned by anybody, the way a prohibition-campaign is laid out. Their authorship is so highly composite and casual that it can be identified no more closely than by reference to society itself. Society, living its long and massive life, imposes rules of living upon its members. The presence of the sex-taboo, for example, is a requirement of social expediency, however much it weighs upon the individual; it provides, not that the sexes should be brought together by custom, nor that they should be left to do as individuals saw fit — which would mean that societal expediency was not involved at all — but that they should be kept apart.

This may be a good place to interpolate the truth that "Nature" cares nothing for human convention, but allows no alibis or extenuating circumstances when it comes to transgressions upon her domain. The imaginative writer¹ may, perhaps, do better justice to the case than the scientist; of a character it is written: "Without assistance he had discovered the elementary yet neglected fact that Nature's stern disciplines are concerned with man's flesh and blood, not his soul; that she punishes the sins of life against matter

¹ Phillpots, E., *The Mother of the Man* (New York, 1908), p. 347.

not morals. No tares were ever yet chidden by Nature for choking good wheat: she helps them to do it; the goats are her chosen not less than the sheep. He had perceived that Nature knew nothing whatever about goodness or badness, and he began to wonder whether God did either. Nature put her foot down when man broke her laws; but whether he broke his own, appeared to be a matter of perfect indifference to her."

If, realizing that there are deep-lying forces of societal control, we can get at the nature of convention and of the public conviction that enforces it, we are approaching the fundamentals of societal laws, and so of societal evolution. It is important here to note the relation between convention and "instinct," for it is significant of the distinction between organic and societal evolution. Without seeking to enter the lists as an advocate of any technical definition of "instinct,"¹ one may take "convention" to mean a piece of behavior that is learned and "instinct" a characteristic that is hereditary. Convention is "second-nature," where instinct is "first-nature." Except for the punctilious analyst, this distinction is close enough. The relation between the two is summarily expressed by saying that convention consistently represses instinct.

Sneezing is natural enough, but convention taboos it, and conventional people have learned to reduce the paroxysm from an explosion to a delicate and not unpleasing murmur. Even the most hardened unconventional tries to repress himself if the impulse rises at a tense and solemn point of, say, some religious service. If he should heartily let himself go, he would speedily feel the disapproval of those about him. It will be

¹ L. L. Bernard, *Instinct* (New York, 1924), makes an elaborate compilation of usage as respects this word.

noted that he would have no occasion for self-discipline if he were alone. Crusoe could be entirely free and unconventional before Friday came. That which is natural and innocent in itself becomes a fault in society — a fact which reveals the essential truth that convention belongs to societal, not organic evolution.

Stealing when hungry, striking when angry, speaking the truth at all times instead of lying discreetly and politely — all these are unconventional. Murder is most highly unconventional, so that the inveterate mankiller is either removed definitely from society or, theoretically, secluded for life. Unconventional behavior, if in sharp enough contrast with the prevailing code, is visited with seclusion in jail, during which it is hoped better standards will be acquired. A so-called "sense of shame" is a convention requiring that parts of the body shall be covered. A convention as to time prescribes that eating shall take place at certain hours and not others.

These last two provisions deserve a little elaboration. It has been the fashion to rank the sense of shame as something instinctive, especially as it applies to the covering of the generative organs. That would remove it from the category of convention. But there are plenty of peoples who, while quite indifferent to specific "nakedness," are ashamed to reveal other portions of the body. They think the head must be concealed, or the small of the back, or the buttocks, serenely uncovering the front of the body. Again, they feel deep shame to be without the lip-plug, or a thin string about the waist, or some tattoo-pattern, no one of which affords concealment. What is common to all cases of shame is

a feeling of difference from the rest, and especially of inferiority, generally in the guise of poverty. The reason why the chest and loins are more commonly covered seems to be chiefly because ornaments can readily be hung over those parts, owing to the configuration of neck and waist; and the reason why properties are hung in front that they can thus be seen more easily, both by one's audience and one's self. This idea of the sense of shame being a sense of inferiority can be observed by anyone. Suppose a man appears at some function where everyone else has white gloves; is he not ashamed of his hands? Ordinarily he is not. But now they look incredibly large and red, and he strives, it may be, to hide them in non-existing pockets. It is borne in upon him either that onlookers will think he is too poor to have the proper dress or that he does not know enough to wear it.

As regards the time-convention, we have a striking portrayal in a short story by Clarence Day, called "The Man Who Knew Gods."¹ I quote:

"'I have habits,' he morosely continued, 'of doing certain things, — eating my meals, for instance, — at quite different hours from those that are prevalent here. I find that everyone who hears of this is surprised at my ways. Their attitude, while not openly intolerant, is distinctly disapproving. When I ask them why, I get no answer — no rational answer. They say simply, "It's the wrong time." Following up this clue I have noticed that not only is the time for performing an act supposed to be sometimes "wrong" and sometimes "right," but that the idea of time in general governs all your people like a tyrant. You can scarcely imagine a life without calendars and clocks . . . so you have drifted into an unthinking fetishistic regard for time. A difference of thirty minutes in

¹ In *The Crow's Nest*, a collection of short sketches.

your dinner hour marks a difference in your social scale. "There isn't time," you sigh, submissively, when you give up something you'd like to do. Time is money, time presses, give me time, are some of your phrases. Your maxims are full of reference to him. Time waits for no man, time cures more than a doctor, time flies, time comforts grief. These are small instances, but their total effect is not small, for it is life itself that you sacrifice to this fetish . . . On the breasts or the wrists of your women, and in every man's pocket, you see a G'il amulet, a watch, to remind them constantly of time. What other god was ever so faithfully worshiped? In every hut in the land you will find his altar, and in your large huts you will find one in every principal room. No matter how free and unconventional their owners may be, no matter how those rooms may vary in their arrangement, richness, furnishings, there stands always in the most prominent place the thing called a mantel; on it, ceremonially flanked by two candlesticks, or vases, sits G'il, the timepiece; and his is the face of all others you most frequently consult. Blind and idolatrous tribesman, time is your deity.'"

Perhaps the author might have added a paragraph on the topic of daylight-saving, a device introduced under stress of war, and resolutely opposed by many who prefer to keep "God's time" in the old conventional way. In any case, it is wellnigh impossible for individuals to do as they wish in this matter, for if one is on a different schedule from his neighbors, much inconvenience results: calls come at meal-times, for example, and many social relations are muddled. Each must do as all do, if there is to be any smoothness in life.

This topic of the power of convention is capable of endless illustration. Cases of all varieties can be found in Sumner's *Folkways*, showing, among many other things, how convention may vary between different times, places, and social groups within the

same society. Many novels, such as Wister's *Virginian*, make much of the contrasts in local codes. "Painters, sculptors, musicians and actors," writes Locke,¹ "have a moral advantage over poets and novelists, in that they are not ashamed of their work. An artist shows you his picture frankly and hopes you will like it; if a poet reads you a sonnet, he has an all-devouring dread lest you may deem him a prig. And the strange part of it is that you do; whereas you think the painter rather a good fellow. A little problem in sociological æsthetics."

All these various twists and turns in convention must, as has been said, be learned — acquired over and over by succeeding generations. A child comes into the world, despite the expression "to the manner born," without the beginning of manners. Line upon line and precept upon precept are necessary before he is fit to associate with his fellow-men on terms that do not include the overlooking of his manners. His training consists, if it is worth anything, largely of repressions; to the conscientious parent, the word "Don't" becomes appallingly familiar. All the conventions taught a child, from the time he is made to eat with some implement other than his fingers until he learns to behave courteously in any sort of surroundings, are repressive of the natural impulses — all the way from that one which bids him seize and gorge like an animal up to that of an undisciplined selfishness, in the presence of which real courtesy is impossible.

These conventions are the rules of the game for living in society. The rules are the game; it is the con-

¹ *Gate of Samaria*, p. 47.

ventions of play that make the numerous kinds of solitaire, or differentiate whist from poker. No game is worth anything, or pleasurable, or even endurable, which has not its code of conduct; otherwise it runs down into chaos and rough-and-tumble. However, no one made these social conventions; they grew up automatically where men lived together. The society, pursuing its massive life, has imposed rules upon its members which must be observed if they care to remain members, and a discipline whose absence means anarchy and confusion. Repression by this discipline occasionally leads to revolt; if, however, the society is to live, it presently settles down to a somewhat altered code of conventions, which is again enforced with the elemental stress of societal coercion. For behind any such code, as its ultimate guarantee, is the public conviction not only of the living group-membership but also of the dead.

The likeness between game-conventions and social codes of behavior is worth a further illustration. Years ago, the baseball authorities set the pitcher back ten feet. Why was this? Was it due to some appreciation of "absolute justice" or essential fairness? Not at all. It was a matter of box-receipts. It was because audiences were losing interest, and the shift was designed to revive it. There had not been enough hitting, and audiences like to see hitting. If they did not, they were restless, prone to throw things, and even inclined to stay away. The new arrangement was not for the sake of perfecting the game in itself; it was forced upon the game by what might be called irrelevant considerations.

It is well to realize that many a social convention has had an origin equally irrelevant. That which conventions serve is the general interest of masses of mankind, who accept them and live by them, believing

them to be for societal welfare, although they have no idea of their origins or, indeed, of precisely what function they actually discharge. All they know — and they are serenely and unshakenly convinced of it — is that the conventions they obey are right and proper. It is evident that if we wish to get down to fundamentals and so arrive at the springs of society's life and evolution, we must seek them in the societal conventions and in the public conviction that sanctions them. The instance of human mating is a sort of test-case. It is controlled by convention. The conclusion is that all social action is so controlled. This is therefore no realm of caprice, but one of constant forces and orderliness in which scientific method, with its fact-gathering, fact-comparison, and tested inferences can be applied.

FOLKWAYS AND MORES

Once attention is focused upon it, the idea of convention, or custom, is obvious enough. Custom surrounds us like a kind of atmosphere. Nevertheless, its labyrinthine complexity and general pervasiveness make it a difficult conception to handle; it is evasive and imponderable, often without firm outlines, resembling not at all the materials studied in the laboratory. Its reduction to a more manageable shape by Sumner,¹ in his *Folkways*, was a true *tour de force*. Though no adequate notion of the folkways can be acquired apart from the study of this author's analysis, with its supporting compendium of cases, it is yet possible to get

¹ *Folkways, a Study of the Sociological Importance of Usages, Manners, Customs, Mores, and Morals* (Ginn and Co., Boston, 1907).

before us the conception of the folkways in its broadest lines. I shall begin with quotation and paraphrase from *Folkways*, thereafter seeking to render more concrete the general conceptions of the author, thus presented in abstract form.¹

Preceding pages show that the course of human evolution is the course of civilization, and that civilization is a matter of the development of what may be termed, in a broad sense, institutions. In their developed form these institutions are very complex and difficult to handle; but they had their simple and informal beginnings and lowest terms² (which can be dealt with more readily) in simple and habitual, unconscious, unheeded, automatic, unpremeditated reactions upon surroundings — in conventions, particularly in those of primitive peoples. Here is where the conception of the folkways fits in; as a natural, elemental, and essential societal form the folkway is analogous to the cell in organic life. It is less derived than any other form, and more primordial. Folkways represent the lowest terms or matrix of the civilization or culture which we have seen to be the external measure and projection of the human type of adaptation to environment.

While it is easy enough to talk vaguely and expansively about convention, it is another thing to possess some definite idea of its origin and nature, and some terminology which shall hold that idea steady amidst the looseness of thought and usage that play about it.

¹ This is a general acknowledgment. The matter quoted and paraphrased is mainly from chs. I, II, III, V, XV, and XX.

² Spencer, H., *Principles of Sociology*, II, 311.

Sumner's analysis has defined the conception of these unconsciously arising societal conventions and he has given us an inclusive name for them. "If," says the opening sentence of *Folkways*, "we put together all that we have learned from anthropology and ethnography about primitive man and primitive society, we perceive that the first task of life is to live. Men begin with acts, not with thoughts." Thus man's primitive mental operations were more in the nature of nervous reflexes as seen in animals, the only apparent difference between the animal reflex and that shown by nascent man lying in that to which each leads. Here is one of the stock areas of transition characteristic of evolution. If the reflexes are called instinctive, and then later we find the social habitudes or conventions that develop out of them to be repressive of instinct, it must be realized that socialization, intervening, has altered the phase or mode of adjustment. In evolution no sharp line of distinction between new and old can be laid down at the outset, nor yet for some time after lines of development have begun to swerve one from the other.

Men begin, then, "with acts, not with thoughts. Every moment brings necessities which must be satisfied at once." These necessities are those of adaptation, and the sign of their presence is pain; and upon the experience of pain there results an attempt, a sort of reflex action, to satisfy the need. In the absence of any experience of the relation of means to ends, while the old need may be met with some precision, new needs call forth but clumsy and floundering efforts for their satisfaction. "The method is that of trial and failure,

which produces repeated pain, loss, and disappointments." Here is certainly a case of variation, and the several variations could scarcely be of equal value in the struggle to live. Hence there must come about a selection of these variations, since early man is subjected, clearly enough, to the same tendency to outrun the supporting power of his environment, and so to the struggle for existence, as are other organic beings. "Pleasure and pain, on the one side and the other, were the rude constraints which defined the line on which efforts must proceed. The ability to distinguish between pleasure and pain is the only psychical power which is to be assumed. Thus ways of doing things were selected which were expedient. They answered the purpose better than other ways, or with less toil and pain. Along the course on which efforts were compelled to go, habit, routine, and skill were developed."

It must be recalled, at this point, that human evolution is not an individual matter, but one of societies. It is easy to show, even from instances derived from the animal world, that association is in many cases an important advantage in the pursuit of the struggle for existence, and so exhibits high survival-value and becomes a basis of selection. Doubtless the earliest groups of men were very small, but, judging from the most primitive types of man that have been found, association in societies seem to have characterized the race. This is where natural selection seems to have prepared the way for a later form of evolution. If, however, the struggle for existence was carried on in groups, each member could profit by the others' experience; "hence there was a concurrence towards

that which proved to be most expedient. All at last adopted the same way for the same purpose; hence the ways turned into customs and became mass phenomena. . . . The operation by which folkways are produced consists in the frequent repetition of petty acts, often by great numbers acting in concert or, at least, acting in the same way when face to face with the same need. The immediate motive is interest. It produces habit in the individual and custom in the group. It is, therefore, in the highest degree original and primitive. By habit and custom it exerts a strain on every individual within its range; therefore it rises to a societal force to which great classes of societal phenomena are due."

"It is of the first importance to notice that, from the first acts by which men try to satisfy needs, each act stands by itself, and looks no further than the immediate satisfaction. From recurrent needs arise habits for the individual and customs for the group, but these results are consequences which were never conscious, and never foreseen or intended. They are not noticed until they have long existed, and it is still longer before they are appreciated. Another long time must pass, and a higher stage of mental development must be reached, before they can be used as a basis from which to deduce rules for meeting, in the future, problems whose pressure can be foreseen. The folkways, therefore, are not creations of human purpose and wit. They are like products of natural force which men unconsciously set in operation, or they are like the instinctive ways of animals which are developed out of experience, which reach a final form of maximum

adaptation to an interest, which are handed down by tradition and admit of no exception or variation, yet change to meet new conditions, still within the same limited methods, and without rational reflection or purpose. From this it results that all the life of human beings, in all ages and stages of culture, is primarily controlled by a vast mass of folkways handed down from the earliest existence of the race, having the nature of the ways of other animals, only the topmost layers of which are subject to control, and have been somewhat modified by human philosophy, ethics, and religion, or by other acts of intelligent reflection." Life is full of customs and small ceremonial usages; all men are subject to them and act under them, with only a little wider margin of voluntary variation than that shown by the savage.

"No objection can lie against this postulate about the way in which folkways began, on account of the element of inference in it. . . . We go up the stream of history to the utmost point for which we have evidence of its course. Then we are forced to reach out into the darkness upon the line of direction marked by the remotest course of the historic stream. This is the way in which we have to act in regard to the origin of capital, language, the family, the state, religion, and rights. We never can hope to see the beginning of any one of these things. Use and wont are products and results. They had antecedents. We never can find or see the first number of the series. It is only by analysis and inference that we can form any conception of the 'beginning,' which we are always so eager to find. . . . The origin of primitive customs is always

lost in mystery, because when the action begins the men are never conscious of historical action, or of the historical importance of what they are doing. When they become conscious of the historical importance of their acts, the origin is already far behind."

If this paraphrase and these quotations have given the reader the fundamental idea of the folkways, he has before him the conception of a stage of societal development lying beyond the purely organic stage, while plainly allied to it in most essentials; and yet falling short of the stage of societal development characterized by compact institutions and a conscious policy. For the present purpose it is not deemed essential to go back and seek to work out the connection with organic nature through the attempt to trace the folkways back into the unconscious; nor is it conceived to be of consequence that we should know, if we could, at just what point the characteristically human mental reactions, as distinguished from "instincts," came first into play. What we wish to do is to see whether the essential ideas of Darwinian evolution can be applied to the course of civilization; and since we can scarcely fail to admit that the early stretches of that course are to be found in the folkways, we should get the more fundamentally at the issue before us by trying out the evolutionary ideas and factors upon the folkways. Here we are working in those lower terms,¹ which are always favorable to the attack upon a complex and difficult matter.

There is a technical distinction between the folkway

¹ If the student of human society cannot vary conditions and so study his phenomena under diverse and selected conditions, he can yet go where, as among primitive peoples, the phenomena exist under diverse, if not chosen, conditions, and study them there.

and the *mos* (*mōs*, singular of "*mōrēs*") which is useful in acquiring a conception of the development of the latter, though, since folkways and mores run together, as childhood merges into youth, it is of small importance in general discussion. The folkways are the popular habits, usages, customs, and traditions. The mores are folkways, "when they include a judgment that they are conducive to societal welfare, and when they exert a coercion on the individual to conform to them, although they are not coördinated by any authority." It is a folkway to say "Thank you" for a service; it is a *mos*, and may be a law, that one should not marry a first cousin. If one omits the former courtesy, there is no feeling that society will suffer for it; if he does the latter, there is a conviction that it is not at all well. To expectorate at will used to be a folkway; now it is against the mores, and often a punishable social misdemeanor. Folkways are always becoming mores, and mores becoming laws, as well as morals.

There is but one phrase, the last one, in the foregoing definition of the mores, that calls for comment in advance of meeting the question as to the mode of development of the mores. This is the clause about coördination by authority. Some of the mores are codified, after they have crystallized into law; some are roughly catalogued, chiefly through the social taboo upon them; by far the larger number, however, by reason of their sum and variety, their changefulness, and their local nature, could not be assembled at all. Efforts to identify them, in books of etiquette and good form, complete letter-writers, or inquiry-columns in newspapers, are both ridiculous and pathetic, and

one finds himself wondering what kind of persons the oracles who emit their complacent and dogmatic dicta are. Terrifying "breaks" are pictured, the uneasy observer being challenged to detect them; if he cannot, it is a depressing situation which should be remedied in an obvious way.

Here are a few "points of social usage" from a highly reputable newspaper: Under what circumstances may a gentleman take a lady's arm? How best to refuse to dance with a man. Unfamiliar foods, and how to eat them. How to enter and leave a restaurant with ladies. How should one act in a Pullman car? What do you do upon arrival at a hotel? When a knife or fork is dropped on the floor, who picks it up? When is a chaperon unnecessary? What is the correct and cultured way to eat corn on the cob? Do you know how to create conversation?

Rules for conduct in wartime show "just what will be permissible and in perfectly good form: 1. Dinners followed by music. 2. Knitting-bees preceded by luncheon. 3. Informal teas for debutantes. 4. Dances for very young folks. 5. Concerts and morning musicales. 6. Opera. 7. Bridge. 8. Skating and all indoor sports. 9. Dancing at war relief and home charity events. 10. Dancing at soldiers' and sailors' clubs."

Encyclopædias of etiquette and propriety, designed for a single place, time, and class, are preposterous; and if they could be letter-perfect for a single geographical location at an instant of time, they would be out of date, even before the ink was dry, and of no possible utility, except for amused research into curiosities, anywhere else in the world.

ORIGIN OF THE MORES

In seeking to make out the origin of the mores, we are, of course, thrown back pretty much on inference;

but the inference need not be a long one, nor need there be any assumptions to speak of, for we have the primitive peoples to go by. The series of factors leading up to the full-fledged mores is: Need; Act; Test on experience of pain or pleasure; Selection of the expedient act; Repetition and Habit; Concurrence; Folkways; Conviction of Expediency; Mores; Religious Sanction. Need is the pain of maladjustment, which all men must recurrently feel. In an absence of a knowledge of the relation of means to ends, the effort to meet need is blundering and groping — often no more than a squirming away. But early man, even if he were no more intellectual than an animal, can learn by experience to evade the painful and, almost unconsciously — certainly without reflection — to repeat the pleasurable. In so doing, he is seeking nothing more than his own interest. Then, by repetition, he may develop habit and skill. This is as far, in the development of the mores, as the individual goes; for the next step, concurrence, produces a mass-phenomenon, and we are within the purview of a social process.

When several persons are pained, or frightened, by the same need, all will not act alike. One will run away; another will stay and try to do something about it. At a visitation of death, savages may abandon the house of the deceased or the whole region; or they may sacrifice; or work magic; or set a quarantine; or "smell out" a witch; or burn the dead; or all fumigate themselves or bathe; or hunt out and kill the nearest white man. These are rather developed procedures of groups; in the beginning, individuals no more than imitated those of their fellows who had stumbled upon

what looked to be expedient adjustments. Only after a time does a whole group act consentaneously upon some promising variation and form ways of meeting certain needs. These are folkways, and they are passed on by tradition to the next generation, as the only right and welfare-insuring conduct. The folkways, when supported by a philosophy of societal welfare, expressed in folklore, proverbs, fables, and myths, become the mores. And when the older generation had passed on into the ghost-status, retaining, as they did, all the prepossessions they had cleaved to in life, then to depart from the ancestral ways was to incur their resentful and irresistible wrath. Thus arrives the sanction of religion, and with it the mores become uniform, universal in the group, imperative, and resistant to change.

The philosophers, a term which must be understood to mean medicine-men, prophets, law-givers, sages, theologians, and poets, try to think out into general propositions of world-philosophy, or of rights and duties in ethics, those views of welfare which the mores suggest. They want to bring the experience and theory of the mores into relation with the sweeping horizon of ghost-fear or mythology, or with general conceptions of the "good," such as the advantages of courage, truthfulness, hospitality, and fidelity to the spoken word.¹ This is what has been called "thobbery," that is, thinking without interest in actual verification.

INSTITUTIONS, MORALS, LAW

From the mores come all human institutions, such as property and marriage. The core of all important institutions is a vital interest — for example, that of sex. Then about that interest there forms an envelope or accretion of folkways and mores, so that the whole is

¹ Sumner, W. G., from an unpublished fragment.

a kind of shapeless mass. Upon this mass selection begins soon to act, commonly in the form of the taboo, the religious prohibition of this and that detail. Incest is tabooed, let us say, or premarital unchastity; after a time, perhaps, plural marriage. Under this chiseling, the amorphous mass takes shape and becomes identifiable as marriage, or exogamic marriage, or monogamy — these terms being no more than labels for certain definite and consistent blocks of mores having to do with the life-condition of bi-sexuality in the matter of adjustment to it. Property is a conventional way of holding things; polygamy and monogamy of arranging the relations of the sexes; monarchy or democracy of setting up and operating the regulative system; monotheism and polytheism of figuring the supernatural. The industrial institutions form a composite adjustment to physical environment, the religious institutions to the supernatural environment, the governmental institutions to the social environment; but they all began with accretions of mores around an interest.

First come the interests, and then the mores. At length there arise myths, proverbs, fables, and philosophies which furnish a web of notions and transcendental combinations capable of giving logical form and coherence to usages and institutions. The morals are always secondary, for they are merely the mores which, by their lastingness and real or fancied importance, have become positive and are defined in dogma and rule. Ethics are an attempt of human reason to get consistency into the existing societal system by making human action come into conformity with what the system requires — or is thought to require — for its

smooth and harmonious operation : what men "ought" to do. The mores can make anything right and prevent condemnation of anything¹; and even the "truth" is, at any period and to a large degree, the function of the time — the way relations of things, when not objectively verifiable, over and over again, by enforced experience, are looked at under the conditions.

As regards laws, all acts of legislation come out of the mores. Up to a certain stage of development, there is only "customary law," or "common law." The customary law may be codified and systematized, as in the codes of Manu or Justinian, with respect to some philosophical principles, and yet remain customary. However, the great difference between the mores and what develops out of them, as laws and institutions, is that the latter have a positive character, while mores are unformulated and undefined. Acts under the laws and institutions may be conscious and voluntary; under the folkways they are unconscious and involuntary, so that they have the character of natural necessity. "The laws, being positive prescriptions, supersede the mores so far as they are adopted. It follows that the mores come into operation where laws and tribunals fail. The mores cover the great field of common life where there are no laws or police regulations. They cover an immense and undefined domain, and they break the way in new domains, not yet controlled at all. The mores, therefore, build up new laws and police regulations in time."

"The essence of laws seems to me to be that they are the remarks (or actions) of persons whose office it is to speak in the group name.

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, ch. XV.

It is this introduction of the official which leads to the divergence between laws and mores, at times, and to the abuse of state control in the special interests of those controlling the group."¹ In the parlance here employed, these performances are variations, fathered by individuals in their own interest or in that of special groups. There are also phases of law not mirrored commonly in life — the marginal, or occasional, or abnormal cases — ways of somehow trying to settle difficult issues. These, too, are here looked upon as variations. They last if they work, provided they do not encounter the opposition of public opinion. In the main, they must be modeled on what is and has been; they do not come out of thin air. That is why they can be called variations.

Illustrations of the relation of law and the mores are endless. "There is but one law among the tribes, and that law is paramount and infrangible — *Pia*, it is our custom."² Says Hearn³ of the Japanese attitude toward the ghosts of the dead: "They represent the moral experience of the race: whosoever denies that experience denies them also, and falls to the level of the beast, or below it. They represent the unwritten law, the traditions of the commune, the duties of all to all: whosoever offends against these, sins against the dead. And, finally, they represent the mystery of the invisible: to Shinto belief, at least, they are gods." Kreon has forbidden the burial of Antigone's brother; she has performed the last rites for him, and is called to account. She replies: "Nor did I think thine edicts so powerful that a mortal might transgress the unwritten, infallible laws of the gods; for they are not something of today or yesterday, but live forever, and no one knows whence they came."⁴

SUMMARY

Summing up at this point the several considerations which precede, we see that man possesses in the brain a sort of specialized adapting organ which relieves the

¹ Llewellyn, K. N., personal communication.

² Whiffen, *Northwest Amazons*, p. 64.

³ *Japan*, p. 54.

⁴ Sophocles, *Antigone*, 453-457.

rest of the body from the necessity of structural adaptation; that the human mode of adaptation is thus mental, and that it is also social; that the measure of human adaptation is the degree of civilization attained; that the course of human evolution thus becomes the course of the evolution of civilization in human society; and that the law of population must receive characteristic modifications when it is applied to man. The brain takes over the whole task of adjustment. Looked at in one way it secures adaptation for man by transforming his environment; in a far broader and truer sense, by learning the laws of nature and devising ways of conforming to them. The details of this new phase and mode of adaptation are no longer matters of biology; the reactions of the individual are cerebral and intellectual. However, these reactions do not remain individual and isolated, but, in ways indicated in this chapter, they become societal and so fall into the domain of the science of society. So soon as concurrence of reactions takes place a new evolutionary mode arises. This is a stage removed from organic evolution, but the connection is unbroken. Inquiring as to the fundamental factors and processes of societal evolution, we have found human actions to be controlled, not hit-or-miss, and to be governed in last analysis by convention, which is repressive of "instinct" and which is guaranteed by public conviction; and we have followed Sumner in a brief analysis and characterization of the folkways.

Since the folkways of a society are the irreducible elements in the adjustment-process on any stage of civilization, it is now possible to modify somewhat the

formula with which we started¹: The measure of the characteristic type of human adaptation is the body of folkways and mores, especially as carved into institutional form.

If folkways are the simplest and most fundamental phenomena of societal life, and if they form the germ and matrix of all human institutions,² it is to them that we can best address ourselves in inquiring as to the application of the Darwinian factors to the life of society. What we wish to consider is this: whether these factors obtain in the folkways and their derivatives, to effect, in the one case as in the other, adaptation. If it can be shown that the folkways are adaptive by way of the activity of factors of the order of those operative in organic evolution — factors which actually operate in the societal domain in the same way that those do in the organic world — then there is no reason to refuse to extend the evolution theory, in its new mode, into the “superorganic domain.” But in treating of evolution in the mores, one must always be ready to refer back to the underlying organic processes, or he gets his feet off the earth and risks losing himself in vague speculation. Grounds for this caution will appear as we go on.

¹ P. 25, above.

² For a vigorous scientific treatment of law as a development out of the folkways, see Corbin, A. L., “The Law and the Judges,” in the *Yale Review* for January, 1914.

CHAPTER III

VARIATION

VARIATION, which means constantly arising difference, is the opposite of uniformity and monotony. If there were no variation in nature, there could be no such multitude of forms, shading into one another by almost imperceptible gradation, as the naturalists record; if there were no variation in the mores, human customs could show no such endless diversity of detail as we see about us. To demonstrate societal variation in formal manner would be a matter of rehearsing long series of slightly or widely differing mores, both primitive and modern. It is not necessary for the present purpose to assemble such exhaustive lists, for anyone can see, if he looks about him, that no two human groups, whether family, club, sect, township, state, or nation, have the same code of mores; nor does the same group retain its code unchanged. Sections within a nation, dissenting factions within a sect, members within a family, are ever developing and accentuating differences. There are two great cultural divisions of the race: Oriental and Occidental, each consistent and with a philosophy and spirit of its own. They have different standpoints and contrasting notions as to what are advantageous societal arrangements — things worth seeking, ways of well-living.¹

¹ Sumner, W. G., *Folkways*, § 5.

The agent of variation is the individual. Here is the real function of the outstanding individual, the "Great Man"; he may seem to produce even a sort of mutation. More as to him later on. Clearly, the individual has an indispensable function in societal evolution, for that process, like organic evolution, cannot start without variation. This has appeared while considering the origin of the mores. Where there is a case of maladjustment, it is the individuals who feel it — generally a good many of them at the same time; then, under a common stress, they begin to throw out tentatives toward readjustment, the earliest of which are no more than unpremeditated squirmings. Only much later do variations come to be planned as genuine experiments. In any case, if the need is widespread, there are likely to be contemporaneous, but independent, efforts to meet it, which look like mere coincidences until it is realized that many minds, in many places, are under the same stress toward adjustment. Then such a happening as the dual invention of calculus, or the nearly simultaneous appearance of the Declaration of Independence and the "Wealth of Nations," becomes less of a coincidence.

Take the case of simultaneous mechanical invention. Howe was only one of many who had been working at the problem of a sewing-machine.¹ Conditions were calling for speedier work and men's minds were being spurred to meet the need. Several applications for the same patent are often filed at about the same time, and suits for infringement of patents have offered evidence along the same line. The late editor of the Dictionary

¹ Numerous other cases in Ogburn, W. F., *Social Change*.

of American National Biography has stated that it is very difficult to identify the genuine inventor, for that often involves adjudication between rival claimants long dead. In fact, the alleged inventor is sometimes no more than the robber of the real one. It is stated that more than four hundred patents have been issued in this country for devices intended to harness the power of sea-waves. Seventy or eighty years ago an official of the United States Patent Office resigned, saying that there would be no further use for the office, "since everything inventable had been invented." In 1920, the applications for new patents rose from 75,657 to 102,940; and in 1922 to 113,597.¹ Patent litigation has sometimes become so ruinous that reliance comes to be rested upon the trademark.

In illustration of simultaneous origination may be cited the fact that, up to about ten years ago, there was no popular Life of Charles Darwin. Then came an aroused interest in evolution, subsequent to the heresy trial in Tennessee, and within a few years no less than four Lives were evoked. Popularizations of the evolution theory have shown the same phenomenon. Interest is somehow aroused in numbers of men; the tendency to cater to that interest is abroad; and presently the new variation appears, often in several places at about the same time.

Variations, when characteristic and important enough, get names, often of individuals, sometimes of sections: boycott, sabotage, peonage, trade-unionism, single-tax, communism, Marxism, Bolshevism, Leninism, Stalinism, Fascism, companionate, Montessori, free love, absolute life, hetairism, Tolstoiism, Oklahoma idea,

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 7, 1922).

Iowa idea, Know Nothing, Bull Moose, referendum and recall (names for revolt from representative government), liberalism, socialism, fundamentalism, Mohammedanism, Buddhism, Christianity, Zionism, Eddyism, Dowieism, Sundayism, Quakerism, Kantian, Hegelian, Shavian, Ibsenism, romanticism, cubism, jazz, sansculottism, naturalism, nudism, and so on without end, all the way from divine revelation to the frothiest of fads and fancies. In 1771, an eminent man wrote: "The young have new words, new language, new amusements; and one can no more talk their talk than dance their dances."¹

"Every possible experiment," says an indefatigable collector of instances² in reference to sex relations and marriage, "compatible with the duration of savage or barbarous societies, has been tried, or is still practised, amongst various races, without the least thought of the moral ideas generally prevailing in Europe, and which our metaphysicians proclaim as innate and necessary."

Heckling, a common feature of English campaigns, is discountenanced in America. A writer in *The Nation*³ thinks that "one would have said, a priori, that heckling must be an American custom, part of the general tendency to license in this unruly country, and that nothing so rude was likely to be found in a land of old and just renown, where everything slowly broadened down from precedent to precedent. Yet the fact is the reverse of this. In America it is the heckler and not the speaker who is on the defensive." Is this because we feel that the heckler is putting himself above us and on a level with the speaker? Is he interrupting a performance we came to see, where in England he is the most interesting part of the performance? "Or is the difference one of those inexplicable national variations of which nothing more is to be said than that they exist?"

A ridiculous case of fad is reported by the *New York Times* for Jan. 25, 1914. "Professor Bergson's lectures on philosophy at the Collège de France are becoming one of the social functions of Paris, with the result of an amusing conflict in the lecture hall between the society dilettanti for whom philosophy is the present

¹ Walpole's "Letters" (Cunningham's ed., V, 350), quoted in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXIX, 288.

² Letourneau, *Evolution of Marriage*, p. 344.

³ Nov. 9, 1916.

mode and the students who attend the lectures as part of their course for a degree. Before the time fixed for a lecture every seat is usually taken by society women, who, because the university is a national one, cannot be excluded. The bona-fide students cannot come early on account of other lectures. Already there have been several scuffles in consequence. Maurice Croiset, the head of the college, has made fruitless appeals to the smart set, which refuses to be deprived of its new diversion. A protest is now being made in the press."

Conscious variation within lines allowed by the mores, or social experimentation, is supposed to be scientific, that is, planned on the basis of knowledge of conditions and of experience in the past; and it is fair to say that verified knowledge has its best chance to enter into the process of societal evolution by way of variation. Nevertheless, variation is not seldom as clumsy and floundering, and as unconscious of the previous history of the race, as are those wild gropings and wallowings of the savage to which we would deny the name of experimentation. The rich and powerful, those who have leisure or means to experiment, can set new variations afloat; and so can the sensational demagogue, living on his wits, and thriving by reason of the fertility of his inventive and persuasive powers. They have fathered many of the "social experiments" of the modern age. But, however "happy ideas" and "projects" may be viewed, it is clear that variations in the folkways, conscious or otherwise, have always been occurring, sometimes perishing at once, sometimes attaining a small following among the concurrent, and again uniting huge factions.

At any stage there are plenty of budding variations in the mores to select from. These are not periodic,

depending upon birth-periods of new organisms; they take place in rapid and sometimes apparently in inconsequent fashion; ideas tumble over each other in the face of the need which evokes them. Then selection cannot, as will be seen, keep pace with the production of the novelties upon which it is to pass, and so the unfittest variations are not eliminated with the expedition characteristic in nature. Further, new variations depend upon older ones which may not have been tested as yet; plenty of ideas and inferences may gather about unverified principles or happy thoughts. So that when the original variations come up for judgment, the case is already confused by the existence of numerous corollaries, all of which cannot well be eliminated along with their supporting principle. For instance, if protectionism might be taken as a variation in social policy, there are not a few who, rejecting the principle, yet fear to select it out for extinction because of the multitude of interests which have developed in dependence upon it.

Illustrations appear in current literature¹: "If bricks were made larger it would save a great deal of time and labor in building, said a contractor, but the standard has been set and any change would be attended by considerable inconveniences. In England when bricks were first made, and up to sixty or seventy years ago, there was a tax on bricks and in order to evade it the bricks were made of larger and larger sizes.

"These were used for cellars and other concealed places. To stop this fraud, an act was passed in the reign of George III fixing the legal size of bricks. Early in Queen Victoria's reign the tax was taken off and the bricks may now be legally made of any size whatever. But any change from the standard size would bring

¹ In the *Philadelphia Inquirer* (Aug. 28, 1911).

about great inconvenience. All calculations are made for building on this standard size, and the London and other building acts have practically fixed it."

Variation in the folkways is self-evident. If the first reactions on environment characteristic of men were clumsy, groping, and non-purposeful, then variation must have been there at the outset. The dream of a medicine-man has often set afloat a new societal variation. But random and inconsequent variation is not confined to primitive man; it can be observed in every age, especially in the case of folkways not subject to conclusive test, as, for instance, in fashion.

Variation comes to be restricted after selection has operated for a time; it can take place only within limits set by prior selection. When certain folkways are taken to be conducive to group welfare, presently receiving social and religious sanction, then variations from them are prejudged as inexpedient, and so there is laid down a "course on which efforts were compelled to go." This is like building two lofty walls on either side of a growing tree; the outspreading of its branches must then take place within the narrowed space. So variations have a chance only — unless, indeed, as in times of violence, the walls should collapse — within the "course" left open. In modern societies, the folkways governing diet no longer permit of variations in the direction of cannibalism; and those of war are supposed to exclude all variations in the direction of using poisons, employing certain types of treachery, and so on. In any case, variation still goes on within whatever limits are laid down; new ideas about eating characterize the folkways of the time, and more new de-

vices for killing men — electrocution, lethal chamber — abound among civilized people than ever the savage could imagine. The new speedily becomes an old story, and then there must be something else.

THE INDIVIDUAL ELEMENT AND THE SOCIAL ELEMENT

Variation, as a display of individual initiative, may be virtually choked out by a traditional system — communalism, for example.¹ The mores of different groups and periods are marked by a preponderance of the individual element or of the social element (group-coördination).

In the early Middle Ages, cohesion in society was strong. All social relations between individuals were an object of loyalty: lord and vassal, husband and wife, comrade and comrade, member and corporation. When the relations became more numerous and complex, these obligations of loyalty antagonized one another and produced moral problems for individuals. That means that the social element broke down. The individual element then became stronger because the individual must at last decide between his obligations; that is, he became judge over them, not mere agent under them. The individual then developed enterprise and variation under custom and tradition, and the Renaissance opened to him a great number of careers in which he could realize and perfect his own career-interest. Liberty came to mean release from the corporate limitations and constraints and the personal obligations, such as vassalage, of the Middle Ages. The mores and, later, the laws took a form to insure this liberty, and they have gradually educated even those groups whose members formerly were enervated by generations of political nullity and police discipline, up to initiative and independent action.

¹ Sumner and Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Individual." The following four paragraphs are based upon an unpublished fragment of W. G. Sumner. Rivers, *Melanesian Society*, II, 6-7, considers the question from a somewhat different angle.

Wherever the social element preponderates, societal power is concentrated and made effective for the ends which the controlling oligarchy may choose, and the individual loses independence of character. He is trained to self-abnegation, submission, and servility. The mores all conform to this temper and to consistency with it. This has been called the Asiatic type of society.

Every system emphasizing the social element requires an intenser concentration of power, and that implies surrender of individual opinion and will. It requires authority and discipline, and these must be concentrated in a few hands or in one. Our political parties and trades-unions are present to illustrate and prove it. Any socialistic scheme works out into submission of the masses and despotism of the leaders. It is evident how intense the antagonism has been between such organizations and our mores; however, after a long dominance of the individual element we must expect a swing over toward that of the social. The present disposition toward socialism, whether it is fanatical or merely coquetry, is a phenomenon of that reaction. This collision between the individual and the social is the result of incomplete harmony between individual interests and social traditions, because society always thinks itself imperiled if its current dogmas are threatened. The conflict is inevitable and must be fought out.

The society always tends to enthrall free thought and free development. The individual is the agent of all criticism, reflection, reform, improvement, variation, invention, and enterprise. It is commonplace to say that what is needed is a true balance of the two elements.

What exists at any time is always a preponderance of the one or the other. Individuality and personality need to be cultivated as an offset to the authority of the society; nevertheless, they cannot safely be given loose rein. There is a kind of automatic regulation of this matter, which resides in the process of societal selection, about to be reviewed.

It is plain that the evolution of society and of societal forms is an extremely complex affair and should be approached in anything but a jaunty manner. Something is gained if this point alone is apprehended.

Viewing variation in the large, it should still be kept in mind that in societal evolution, as in organic, there can be no comprehensive perspective of it over long epochs by reason of the extinction of transitional, non-advantageous variants; and, in the one case as in the other, many a mean between extremes has been preserved, if at all, only under the protection of isolation or in the form of a fossil or survival. Such members of the evolutionary series, persisting occasionally in isolation or represented by more or less faded survivals after they have passed away, are cannibalism, human sacrifice, blood-vengeance, the ordeal-trial, wife-purchase, matrilineal descent — all variations in the effort to live which were not destined to last on.

The case of variation in the mores, despite the fact that acculturation looks like suggested variation, reduces ultimately to the mental reaction of individuals who, unconsciously — later, to some extent, consciously — throw out, under the stimulus of need, a series of tentatives. Certain of these speedily disappear, while others are concurred in, becoming, first, characteristic

folkways of the group concerned and then, when they have attained common approval as the palladia of the society's prosperity, constituting its mores. Here is where they enter into the range of societal evolution, for they are now societal, as distinguished from individual, phenomena. From this point on, the individual pretty much drops out of our perspective. Though the origination and variation of the mores go back to him, the mores themselves are mass-phenomena and their selection, transmission, and eventual adjustment are characteristically societal, not individual, just as civilization is a societal product and incapable of development in the absence of numbers.

CHAPTER IV

SELECTION

ALL human societies are found adhering to codes of mores which represent adjustments to their life-conditions. But adjustment is never perfect; there is always some misfit, for the life-conditions are ever changing; and so, under the stress of pain or of allure-ment to greater satisfaction, variation is ceaseless. Usually it means adjustment of detail; then, when enough details have been altered, there has come about, though it is visible only in long perspective, a modification of whole institutions. Not all the variations can prevail, for they are both numerous and also contradictory not only of what is but also of one another. Some of them are destined to supplant what is, or to prevail against rivals, and others to be choked out. The defeat of them all would mean the continuance of what is, which never occurs; generally, when nearly all the innovations along a certain line have been eliminated, one or a few are left holding the field. The case is like that of natural selection, where the fitter organisms survive, being relieved of competition by the weeding-out of the less fit. There is here, again, no "reasoning from analogy"; there is simply a statement of fact. It is a commonplace that customs and institutions arise, attain vogue and strength, finally

to yield to other ways of living and, except for the pallid and rationalized survivals they leave behind, to disappear. That is, there is in evidence a process of selective elimination. To say that the survival of the fitter mores is proved by that of the fitter organisms would be as imbecile as to assert, with the triumphant reconciler of science and theology, that the life-cycle of the butterfly "proves" immortality. There is an observed persistence of demonstrably fitter variations in the mores, as of more expedient variations of organisms.

AGENCY *vs.* CAUSE

Various historians, intent upon explaining the replacement of one set of mores and institutions by another, have revealed the common human weakness of seeking an agent rather than a cause — of attributing "progress" forthwith to personal agency, through the prowess of human reason, rather than of accounting for adjustment (including both "progress" and "retrogression") by impersonal causation, operating in accord with undeviating law. They have reported that men perceived the evil of such-and-such a system — for instance, of slavery — and, taking their corporate destiny firmly and intelligently in hand, abolished it out of hand because it was "wrong." The acme of this sort of phantasy is found in the theory that savages got together and drew up a "social contract." More commonly nowadays the chronicler of social change, realizing the futility of such an explanation, has acclaimed the outstanding individual who has molded affairs by his compelling intellect, keenness of insight, and dominating personality, so that "the his-

tory of a people is the biography of its Great Men." It is necessary to challenge both these theories of agency, multiple or single, before presenting an account of selection that is more nearly in accord with the facts.

THE "MASSES"

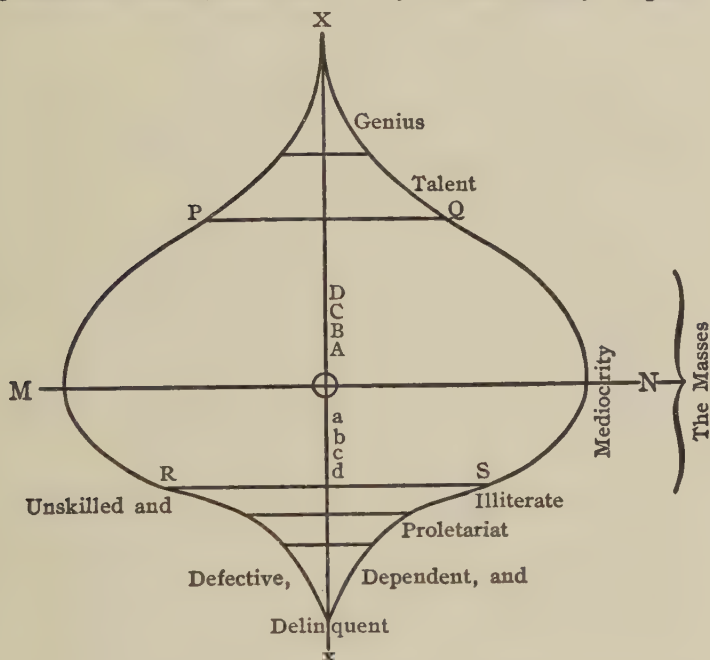
Who, first, are "the people" who, as we are told, turn their minds to a survey of their own corporate life and, applying reason to what they see, stride forth to the realization of their own destiny? Who are "the masses"? This is a question upon which any student of human society should recurrently refresh his mind; for, by the very fact that he is studying at all, he is a privileged person and, as such, he is ever exposed to the insidious peril of judging all humanity by the group to which he belongs. He must always be coaching himself lest he lose to sight these masses who form the bulk of mankind.

In Sumner's *Folkways*¹ is a diagram, here reproduced, which schematizes the constituency of society, as rated upon societal value. Part of Sumner's comments are quoted.

"At the top we have a small number of men of genius. Below these we may cut off another section which includes the men of talent. At the bottom we find the dependent, defective, and delinquent classes which are a burden to society. Above them is another stratum, the proletariat, which serves society only by its children. Persons of this class have no regular mode of earning a living, but are not, at the moment at which the classification is made, dependent. These are the only ones to whom the term 'proletarian' could with any propriety be applied. Next above these is another well-

¹ §§ 48 ff. After Ammon and Galton, as indicated.

defined stratum, — the self-supporting but unskilled and illiterate. Then all who fall between *PQ* and *RS* are characterized by mediocrity, and they constitute 'the masses.' . . . The present diagram is made unsymmetrical with respect to *MN* to express the opinion that the upper strata of *PQRS* (the lower professional and the semi-professional classes) are now, in any civilized society, larger in



proportion than symmetry would indicate. The line *MN* is therefore a mode, and the class upon it is the modal class of the society, by means of which one society might be compared with another.

"Galton estimated the number of men of genius in all history at four hundred. An important fraction of these were related by blood. The 'men of the time' he rates at four hundred and fifty in a million, and the more distinguished of them at two hundred and fifty in a million. These latter he defines by saying that a man, to be included amongst them, 'should have distinguished him-

self pretty frequently, either by purely original work, or as a leader of opinion.' He finds that illustrious men are only one in a million. On the other hand, idiots and imbeciles in England and Wales are one in four hundred, of whom thirty per cent can be educated so as to be equal to one-third of a normal man each; forty per cent can be made worth two-thirds of a man; twenty-five or thirty per cent pass muster in a crowd. Above these are silly persons whose relatives shield them from public knowledge."¹

This diagram, confined to a narrow page, does not do justice to the bulk of the masses. To fit the facts, the line *MN* should be greatly elongated. An impression of the horde of "common people," in this country, can be acquired by realizing that the income, per capita, in 1926, has been estimated as only \$770, or as only \$500; in 1914, as \$335²; or by reflecting upon the statistics of the income tax. In 1924, nearly four-fifths of this tax were paid by less than one per cent of the 7,024,912 individuals making returns; 70,249 persons paid 78 per cent of the tax; 64 per cent of those filing returns provided only 3 per cent of the levy. These persons were 4,526,874 in number, with incomes ranging from \$1000 to \$3000, and they received 34.8 per cent of the total reported amount of personal incomes. The number making no return can be inferred; even a President may lapse into the assumption that the income-tax payers are practically coextensive with the nation, whereas, in 1924, there were only 4,270,121 taxable returns out of a population of some 115,000,000.³ "The latest available statistics of the National Bureau of Economic Research show that 96.8 per cent of the population of New York State have incomes of less than \$5000 a year."⁴

The identity and characteristics of the masses, and their relation to the mores, are brought out by Sumner⁵ in an analysis which is deserving of extended quotation.

¹ Galton, *Hereditary Genius*, pp. 25, 47.

² Figures of various experts, in *N. Y. Times*, June 18, 1922; Feb. 21, 1927; Nov. 26, 1927; *N. Y. Evening Post*, "Literary Review," March 4, 1922.

³ *N. Y. Times*, Feb. 21, 1927; *Independent*, Vol. 117, p. 5.

⁴ Downes, A. M., "The Cost of Illness," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXL, 465.

⁵ *Folkways*, §§ 52, 53, 54.

"The masses are not large classes at the base of a social pyramid; they are the core of the society. They are conservative. They accept life as they find it, and live on by tradition and habit. In other words, the great mass of any society lives a purely instinctive life just like animals. We must not be misled by the conservatism of castes and aristocracies, who resist change of customs and institutions by virtue of which they hold social power. The conservatism of the masses is of a different kind. It is not produced by interests, but it is instinctive. It is due to inertia. Change would make new effort necessary to win routine and habit. It is therefore irksome. The masses, moreover, have not the power to reach out after 'improvements,' or to plan steps of change by which needs might be better satisfied. . . . The masses are the real bearers of the mores of the society. They carry tradition. The folkways are their ways. They accept influence or leadership, and they imitate, but they do so as they see fit, being controlled by their notions and tastes previously acquired. They may accept standards of character and action from the classes, or from foreigners, or from literature, or from a new religion, but whatever they take up they assimilate and make it a part of their own mores, which they then transmit by tradition, defend in its integrity, and refuse to discard again. . . . It would be a great mistake to suppose that any people ever accepted and held philosophical or religious teaching as it was offered to them, and as we find it recorded in the books of the teachers. The mores of the masses admit of no such sudden and massive modification by doctrinal teaching. The process of assimilation is slow, and it is attended by modifying influences at every stage. What the classes adopt, be it good or ill, may be found pervading the mass after generations, but it will appear as a resultant of all the vicissitudes of the folkways in the interval. . . . It is the classes who produce variation; it is the masses who carry forward the traditional mores.

"It is a fallacy to infer that the masses have some occult wisdom or inspiration by virtue of which they select what is wise, right, and good from what the classes offer. There is, also, no device by which it is possible to obtain from the masses, in advance or on demand, a judgment on any proposed changes or innovations. The masses are not an oracle. . . .

"Fifty years ago Darwin put some knowledge into the common stock. The peasants and artisans of his time did nothing of the kind. What the masses do with thoughts is that they rub them down into counters just as they take coins from the mint and smooth them down by wear until they are only disks of metal. The masses understand, for instance, that Darwin said that 'men are descended from monkeys.' Only summary and glib propositions of that kind can ever get currency. . . . Thinking and understanding are too hard work. If anyone wants to blame the masses, let him turn to his own case. He will find that he thinks about and understands only his own intellectual pursuit. He could not give the effort to every other department of knowledge. In other matters he is one of the masses and does as they do. He uses routine, set formulæ, current phrases, caught up from magazines and newspapers of the better class."

The acute writer of fiction is not unaware of such facts as the above. "It is astonishing what little account our sociological writers take of the elementary nature of the minds of the masses; how easily they are amused; how readily they are imposed upon; how little they are capable of analytical thought; at the same time, how intellectually vain they are, which is their undoing."¹

It is these masses that have to be moved, if the mores are going to be changed, that is, if selection is to take place. The Moscow government has been discovering this. "Any delineation of the average Russian's views of America that ignores the lowly peasant is incomplete, for he and his millions of brothers unknowingly hold the destiny of their country in their clumsy hands."² In general, the masses form a resisting inertia in the path of change; to accredit "the people" with an intelligent plan for the realization of a chosen destiny, or even with an outlook upon the course of society, is

¹ Locke, W. J., *Where Love Is*, p. 80; the idea is elaborated on succeeding pages.

² Haskell, W. N., in *N. Y. Times* (July 19, 1931).

fantastic. Further evidence as to this will appear later on. It is difficult for even the more sophisticated to accept innovations. Proverbs, as condensations of folk-wisdom, are often counsels of caution: *Medius tutissimus ibis*: "Be not the first by whom the new is tried."

This last piece of advice, however, is supplemented by: "Nor yet the last to lay the old aside." If everyone held tight to caution and stuck to safe convention, no advance could be made; all would dash back incontinent into the crowd and mill about in one place. It is some such conviction as this that drives impatient souls to the "Great Man" theory.

THE "GREAT MAN" THEORY

Apparently there are not so many great men as we have been given to understand. Galton's estimate of their number has been seen to be a modest one. And not all of the giants have been able to think in terms of society. "Roosevelt said . . . that he was always astonished, in travelling round the United States, to find how few Americans thought nationally. And he added that he could count on the fingers of one hand the citizens of our country whom he had come in contact with, who thought internationally."¹ It is not likely that former ages had a larger proportion of individuals capable of dominating events.

In the D'Entrecasteaux Islands, "the full blaze of publicity shines on the whole life of the . . . native and his every action is done in the sight of his fellow men. This, perhaps, is partly the cause of

¹ Cannon, C. J., "The Crabbing of Youth by Age," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXI, 795.

the lack of marked personalities among them. The number of men who, either through force of character or through their outstanding virtues or vices, are conspicuous, even to the slightest degree, among their fellows, is very few.”¹

Some men of eminence have disavowed the unbounded powers attributed to them.

In a rather sentimental romance² Napoleon is directly quoted. “He said himself: ‘The greater one is the less free-will one has: one depends on events and circumstances. I declare myself the most enslaved man in the world. My master has no pity, and by my master I mean the Nature of Things.’ Political economy was too strong for the Emperor, perhaps because he had never troubled to acknowledge her as a factor in his designs.” The reference is to the embargo on England. Again, “he wrote thus: ‘In my way Europe might soon have become a single nation and any man wherever he travelled might have felt he was in his native country all the time. This amalgamation will come sooner or later by the force of circumstances; the impulse is there, and I believe that after my fall and the disappearance of my system no lasting equilibrium will be possible except through the amalgamation and confederation of great nations.’” Of Napoleon a great contemporary said, in response to a remark that Napoleon must have had magic in his personality: “Certainly his personality was a superior one. But the main point lies here — that men were certain of reaching their ends through him. Therefore they clung to him as they do to any one who inspires in them a similar certainty. . . . This is an old story that ever repeats itself: human nature is made that way. No one serves another of his own accord; but if he knows that he is serving himself in so doing, he does it gladly. Napoleon knew men too well, and he knew how to make the proper use of their weaknesses.”³

“I claim not to have controlled events,” says Lincoln, “but confess plainly that events have controlled me.” Lincoln repeatedly

¹ Jenness and Ballentyne, *D'Entrecasteaux*, p. 202.

² Barrington, E., *The Thunderer, a Romance of Napoleon and Josephine*, pp. 227, 324, 333.

³ Eckermann, J. P., *Gespräche mit Goethe*, II, 73 (April 6, 1829).

waited on events, taking the lead indicated by them. Shallow people called it mere drifting, and him a fatalist. His credence of dreams and admitted superstition certainly do not help dispel this impression of the fortuitous. It is physical geography, said Lincoln, which makes this country of necessity a union: "In all its adaptations and aptitudes it demands union and abhors separation. In fact, it would ere long force reunion, however much of blood and treasure the separation might have cost."¹

Andrew Jackson reflects upon the office of President²: "A president is but the fly on the chariot wheel. Being vain, the insect might flatter himself with the theory that he is the reason of that dust and motion he observes. . . . He is pressed upon by one force or another, and maybe a dozen at once, and must go with conditions like a man in a landslide. As I say, the office is so much bigger than the man that it transacts the man, and not the man the office. It is as though one were made president of the Potomac, or of a glacier. Could he take the one beyond its banks with a war or stay the other in its progress with a veto? He might run up a flag, order a bugle blown, fire a gun; but the river or the glacier would be the last impressed. No, sir; were one made chief magistrate of that snow-storm which now whitens the world outside, and set to rule its flakes, he would be in as much control as when given a White House and told that he is President."

Says the *New York Times*, editorially, on "Presidential Leadership"³: "The President of the United States undoubtedly has often to be a leader of the people in the full sense of the word. But his skill and effectiveness may depend partly upon giving him a free hand, in deciding when the hour has struck for him to assert himself. Numberless were the reproaches leveled at President Wilson for being so deliberate in bringing the United States into the World War. . . . But afterward Mr. Joseph Choate maintained that the President had been wiser than them all, and had done quite right in waiting for the propitious moment. Such is the necessary attitude of every leader in a democracy. Lord Cromer once com-

¹ Charnwood, *Lincoln*, p. 337; Stephenson, N., *Lincoln*, pp. 30, 119-120, 328-329, 417-418.

² In Lewis, A. H., *Peggy O'Neal* (Philadelphia, 1903), pp. 331-332.

³ March 9, 1930.

pared it to the waiting of a man in a boat off the mouth of a tidal river. Not until wind and tide and waves favor him can he make a successful entry." He must watch for the hour "when he can grasp the skirts of circumstance."

President Wilson, who held such exceptional power, well knew its limits. He was disturbed by the "unqualified hope that men have entertained everywhere of immediate emancipation from the things that have hampered and oppressed them. You cannot in human experience rush into the light . . . and we must see to it that those who hope are not disappointed, by showing them the processes by which that hope must be realized — processes of law, processes of slow disentanglement from the many things that have bound us in the past. You cannot throw off the habits of society immediately any more than you can throw off the habits of the individual immediately. They must be slowly got rid of, or, rather, they must be slowly altered. They must be slowly adapted, they must be slowly shapen to the new ends. . . . We must weave out of the old materials the new garments which it is necessary that men should wear." The privilege of those who have had more chances in life is to know the needs of mankind and try to think for them. "And when I think of mankind, . . . I do not always think of well-dressed persons. Most persons are not well-dressed. The heart of the world is under very plain jackets, the heart of the world is at very simple firesides, the heart of the world is in very humble circumstances; and, unless you know the pressure of life of the humbler classes, you know nothing of life whatever. Unless you know where the pinch comes, you do not know what the pulse has to stand, you do not know what strain the muscles have to bear, you do not know what trial the nerves have to go through to hold on." We must "feel with them and think for them, so that we can translate their desire into a fact, so far as that is possible, and see that that most complicated and elusive of all things which we call justice is accomplished." ¹

"With little evidence of his country's gratitude and affection, but with a feeling of profound relief, Washington retired to private life. Lincoln's body was struck down by an assassin, and his spirit only a little later by the American people. The reconstruction period was a 'landslide' against Lincolnism. Though he died a

¹ *N. Y. Times* (May 11, 1919).

martyr, his principles were utterly reversed by his countrymen in those sad days after the civil war. If Lincoln had lived they would have broken him. Clemenceau pulled France triumphantly through the great war, and at the Peace Conference his only thought was France. But while he was engrossed in this great enterprise his partisan foes organized against him. And they broke him. Now Wilson is rejected."¹ It was reported that President Wilson, shortly before his death, stated that he was glad he had broken down; that if he had persuaded the people to go into the League of Nations, it might have been a great personal and political triumph, but that now they were thinking the thing through more steadily. That probably means that they were coming more clearly to recognize their personal and local interests in the plan.

President Roosevelt was supposed to be a masterful, uncontrolled, impulsive sort of ruler, who did not hesitate to bid defiance to public opinion. In 1903, a certain gentleman wrote him to secure his support in making California forest rangers also game wardens. The reply was as follows:²

"Would it be possible for you to get up something in the nature of a petition that would justify me in saying that there was a genuine movement in the State itself to have the forest rangers made game wardens? I can show you my attitude in the matter by the analogy of the Yosemite. I think the Yosemite should be under national control. A lot of good people in California think so too; but until there is a strong sentiment — if possible a predominant sentiment — to that effect, I should do damage by advocating it, for I should merely arouse hostility. It is just the same thing with these forest reserves. I want to go just as far in preserving the forests and preserving the game and wild creatures as I can *lead* public sentiment. But if I try to *drive* public sentiment, I shall fail, save in exceptional cases. Occasionally, where I have deemed the case wholly exceptional, I have gone, and in future in such cases I shall go, directly contrary to public sentiment, and sometimes I have had public sentiment turn right around and support me; but in a government like ours the wisdom of an extreme step of this kind is directly proportionate to its rarity."

¹ "Wilson's Defeat — and After," letter in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 7, 1920).

² Quoted by courtesy of the Elihu Club, Yale University.

Some eminent and influential men have thus come to grips with "the nature of things," or "the spirit of the times," or public sentiment, and have experienced the toughness of its antagonism. They have run foul of the mores, as lodged in the masses and supported by their conservatism. Lincoln's remarks on the power of public opinion may be recalled. A recent writer ¹ puts it as follows :

"Public opinion is an even more pervasive influence than we have yet admitted to ourselves — as pervasive as the air we breathe — so that it is almost as inconceivable that we should get entirely out of it as that men should be able to fly to a height above that at which our atmosphere ceases. Each epoch is surrounded by its ideas as the earth's surface is surrounded by its atmosphere. And the life struggle of men of genius is often a rather tragic attempt to fashion for themselves a new species of lungs in order to fly up out of this fog and think and feel freely without a traditional bias."

One should not forget the great men who were ahead of their time. There was Roger Bacon, who was smothered by ecclesiasticism. White ² lists the many benefits that might have been looked for if he had been let alone; and in these days we are hearing of his having committed to cipher much that he dared not otherwise record. Copernicus and others discreetly held back results and views until safe in the grave. The less discreet have been crucified, inquired into by a Holy Office, popularly persecuted, ridiculed, and ignored. The world, says Sir Ronald Ross, ³ throws its geniuses on the dust-heap; he instances three men,

¹ Parsons, A. B., "Sex and Genius," in *Yale Review*, XIV, 739.

² *Warfare of Science and Theology*, I, 390.

³ *N. Y. Times* (March 1, 1923).

including Walter Reed, who led in the conquest of tropical disease.

If one faces this great-man question squarely, what he sees first is that the outstanding individual is impossible outside his own place and time. The French Revolution set the stage for Napoleon; he could not have become a world-figure in Central Africa or even on the American frontier. Had Darwin been born in 1409 instead of 1809, there could have been no Darwinism; he might well have perished at the stake. One might speculate along the same line concerning Michelangelo, Beethoven, or Shakespeare.

It is a kind of shorthand to say that Lincoln destroyed slavery in America; but many have come to believe that when he had signed the Emancipation Proclamation, that annihilation had been accomplished. Such people trust serenely to the enactment of laws and the passing of resolutions, irrespective of the forces in the field. The decline of slavery is a long and complicated story¹; but if one must assign an agency in that case of selection, it is suggested that the sun had a good deal to do with it. What happened, most briefly, was that the system, long in common respect and repute, not opposed by any ethical or religious considerations, introduced in the North as in the South, failed, in the North, in competition with free labor, and came there to be looked upon with small regard, then with disapproval, and finally as a sin. That is the way we humans are prone to regard customs which we do not share. Not so in the South, however; for free labor did not seek those latitudes, but flowed into

¹ Sumner and Keller, *Science of Society*, Ch. X.

Northern ports and from them westward, along latitudinal lines. In the South, the slaves remained the sole available labor-force for such occupations as cotton-raising. Slave-labor met no competition and was justified, as is any popular usage, by appeal to "logic" and to Scripture. It might be noted that the Southerners had no trouble in finding Bible support for the system, for it was an unquestioned prosperity-policy in the ancient world, whereas the Northerners had to take recourse to agile interpretation to make a scriptural case against what they had come to disapprove. In the end, the issue defined itself as a threat of disruption of the Union, and we have Lincoln's letter to Greeley for it that he would have freed none, all, or part of the slaves to preserve the Union. In short, the name of Lincoln, because of our weakness for personification, is used as a kind of label or symbol for a great, impersonal movement that led to selection; and, as is often the case, the symbol has been taken for the reality it portrayed, which was too irksome to study out.

The great man is the product of his time and place, and his greatness consists in his insight, or luck, in producing a variation — in anticipating some massive movement that is about to take place anyhow. He is the protagonist in adjustment to existing social laws and to altered life-conditions of society, not the dictator or challenger of either. This is no derogation from his greatness; it is a recognition of it, rather. To do what Napoleon, or Darwin, or Lincoln did, one must have a superior endowment, natural and acquired. But the determining social cause is something very different from the human agency; the latter is always secondary

and relatively incidental, and wholly ineffective by itself. To confuse the two is to miss essential truth. The effective cause lies in the unpremeditated movement of the masses of men. The great man interprets them to themselves.

A speech by D'Annunzio,¹ in 1919, thrilled the masses, much as Bryan's "cross of gold" oration, in 1896, "and filled the measure of the unspoken thoughts trying to form themselves in the minds of the audience." It was the mass of debtors, not the creditors, who saw their interests subverted by free silver. Similarly with Ingersoll's "Plumed Knight" effort, when he nominated Blaine, in 1876. Beecher, in an antislavery address, threw a pair of shackles on the platform and stamped on them. "If the audience had not been already thrilled with hatred of slavery and longing to have its thoughts formulated for it, the action would have fallen flat, it might have been laughable."

The leader cannot be great and unpopular, at the same time; if he has to wait for popularity till after death, he must wait till then for greatness also. Then, when the times have caught up with him, he may get a monument.

"A personality . . . acquires historical importance when it deals with the many, when its ideas, actions, words are understood by the many, affect the many. If the multitude gathers around one, it means that what one is teaching is of interest to so many individuals that they form a multitude around him.

"The more limited our knowledge of the one, the more important is the light that may be shed by the many. The many seldom present difficult problems, for it is never very difficult to find out what in a given situation they had in common. What were their common conditions of existence, what were their common hopes, what were their fears, interests, purposes? Once we find that out, the reactions of the many are not difficult to understand. The particular historical conditions under which Jesus developed, lived, min-

¹ *N. Y. Times* (May 7, 1919).

istered and died are bound to help us understand his life and hence his teachings more intimately. How the Greeks or the Romans, the Gauls, the Goths or the Slavs at various times conceived and pictured to themselves Jesus and his teachings is an interesting problem in itself. It is the history of Christianity, it is the story of Jesus in the course of human history. . . . Historical truth is such a constructive insight into a given situation as to carry with it conviction of real life. Social life is then moving within its conditions of existence; and personalities, in their words and deeds, are correlated with their fellow men and appear in their historical, that is, their representative capacity. . . .

"There should be nothing mystical about the trite observation that every crisis produces its great men. The fact is that under ordinary conditions of existence, when we are quite sane and safe, we are using but a small fraction of our potential intellectual and emotional powers. It is precisely such social strain produced by a crisis that increases not our potential capacity, but the percentage of capacity at which we are actually working, thinking, feeling. Such a crisis, while greatly increasing numerically the broad base of the intellectually and emotionally active members of society, quickens as well the activities of the individual, and further heightens the individual lives through their manifold interreactions. Greater achievement in both quantity and quality is almost inevitable. All dimensions are enlarged. Creative ability is enlarged; destructive folly is enlarged; all human activities, all elements of friction are increased for good or for evil; and the scale must be larger for the outstanding personalities who are to marshal the enlarged forces of life.

"All dimensions being enlarged, single figures are not outstanding unless they are of heroic size. Hence they tower long afterwards over life's subsided flow, when humanity is again resting in routine existence from its mental strain or physical exhaustion." ¹

That "the historic greatness of an individual lies exactly in this: in allowing himself to be carried by a social current," ² is only part of the case; he must also

¹ Simkhovitch, V. G., *Toward an Understanding of Jesus*, pp. 3-4, 30-31.

² Gumplowicz, L., *Sociologie und Politik*, p. 64.

see, or sense, the trend toward a new adjustment and become the champion of it. Of the European treaties at Locarno, it is said :¹

"The thing is too big for any one man to claim it as his handiwork. Indeed, it is altogether probable that, if the full truth were known, no group of statesmen at Locarno, however powerful, were much more than instruments in the hands of the people of their various countries. The time had come when Europe simply had to have assurance of quiet and stability, and the delegates at the conference dared not go home without having something to show. If Tolstoi were to write of the ups and downs of diplomacy, as he did write of the blind shiftings of troops in a great battle, he would bring out the fact that great popular forces swayed the result at Locarno much more than could the conversations and combinations of the assembled diplomats."

The contemporary marvels of leadership are Kemal, Stalin, and Mussolini. The first is reported² to have dauntlessly assaulted the mores of dress, especially in the matter of the fez, and of language, and seems to be succeeding. The second says he is intent upon realizing an ideal system, communism, and operates almost solely, at present, for economic and political ends; the revolution he now heads has attacked, along with private property, also religion and the family. The third is a realist who has his hand upon all phases of Italian national life, and his leadership has a long list of practical accomplishments. All three appear to work by fiat and to possess a kind of hypnotic power over their respective nations. It is too early to judge accurately concerning any one of the trio, but it is absolutely certain that their leadership will end as soon as their popular support is alienated. At present, their people believe them to be protagonists of their best, national interests.

Years ago, Herbert Spencer³ summed up the issue as to the great man, in the form of an analogy :

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 20, 1925).

² "Mustapha Kemal Sets the Styles," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLVII, 356-366.

³ *Study of Sociology*, p. 36.

"Were any one to marvel over the potency of a grain of detonating powder, which explodes a cannon, propels the shell, and sinks the vessel hit — were he to enlarge on the transcendent virtues of this detonating powder, not mentioning the ignited charge, the shell, the cannon, and all that enormous aggregate of appliances by which these have severally been produced, detonating powder included; we should not regard his interpretation as very rational. But it would fairly compare in rationality with this interpretation of social phenomena which, dwelling on the important changes the great man works, ignores that vast preëxisting supply of latent power he unlocks, and that immeasurable accumulation of antecedents to which both he and this power are due."

AUTOMATIC SELECTION

In short, for the causes of selective alteration in the mores, we here look to the more massive factors that have to do with the life of society as a whole, as, for instance, economic change or the rise of a religion. No great selection among the mores can take place apart from the swinging of the body of the society; there is a "social movement" and the result is a "new social order," that is, an altered body of mores. The "silent forces of reconstruction" bring about the "glacier-like movements of history,"¹ and the "verdict of history" is a cool, detached estimate of a long perspective, in which the short-lived individual drops out of account except as he rises conspicuous upon the waves of popular sentiment which he can neither create nor control and which would be rising or ebbing whether he were there or not.

As it is "nature" that performs natural selection, so is it "society" that accomplishes selection among

¹ Morris, R., "The Silent Forces of Reconstruction," in *Yale Review*, X, 545-557 (April, 1921).

the mores and institutions. By "nature," the personalization of which is so difficult to avoid, is meant here, with Darwin,¹ "only the aggregate action and product of many natural laws, and by laws the sequence of events as ascertained by us"; similarly, by "society," or the social order, we mean here only the aggregate action and product of many societal laws, and by societal laws the sequence of societal events. There is, as will be seen, something about societal selection which is after the model of natural selection, massive and elemental, as well as impersonal. It appears to deserve the designation "automatic," as distinguished from "rational" — premeditated, purposeful, based upon verified knowledge, scientific. Where individuals and groups within a society are striving only for their own personal and local interests, seeing nothing beyond them, with the result that certain unplanned consequences accrue (through the elimination or persistence of variations in the mores) for society as a whole — under such conditions, it seems reasonable to conclude, selection is spontaneous and automatic. Societal selection is a complicated affair, not to be explained offhand by easy reference to the human mind and its choices.

CONFLICT

To bring about selection of any sort, there is need of a conflict between variations. If you want to pick out the fastest sprinter among forty boys, you do not do so by inspection, lot-casting, or even incantation; you line them up at scratch and let them run it out.

¹ *Origin of Species*, p. 75.

In the case of the folkways, this contest cannot take place as between ideas, though we may figuratively represent it as so doing; as, for example, when we speak of the conflict between conservatism and radicalism, religion and science, and so on. The real struggle is between the adherents or exponents of the mores in question, and it is through the issue of that struggle that a given set of mores is carried forward toward universality or consigned to oblivion.

That such a struggle between groups characterized by different codes of mores shall never cease is a matter which is settled in the world order. The struggle for existence — the securing of a food supply — is in itself sufficient to assure conflict of all grades between organic beings. There will always be conflict where there are wants and insufficient means to satisfy all. And means are never sufficient, for it is provided in human nature that wants multiply and diversify as they are about to be satisfied. Among men, the struggle is group-wise. Driven by their interests, groups of all sizes, from the race-group down to the family, are always in conflict of some kind with their competitors. Their relations begin with latent hostility, passing into antagonistic coöperation,¹ where minor differences are sunk in prospect of some larger mutual gain. A "race-struggle"² is always on. Wherever interests coincide in their demands there is ground for competition and conflict; and the main interests of all human groups are identical: to live and reproduce, and then to attain a higher standard of living.

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 21; Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Antagonistic Coöperation."

² Gumplowicz, L., *Der Rassenkampf*.

ETHNOCENTRISM

There exists, further, in the mores themselves a ground for antagonism due to differences in code, which often cloaks over the more elemental basis of hostility. The mores of a society are not seldom offensive to another group; and where they are not that, they are contemptible or laughable. It would appear that certain groups brought into contact with others find the ways of the latter so intolerable — for instance, cannibalism, or nudity, or widow-immolation — that they may deliberately and consciously set out to get rid of them. In any profitable discussion of societal selection, this matter must be included. It has been seen that the code of mores of a group becomes its prosperity-policy; the mores in which the group has concurred are thought to be conducive to societal welfare, and departure from them is regarded as perilous. Thus they become uniform, universal in a group, imperative, and resistant to change, growing as time goes on, “more and more arbitrary, positive, and imperative.”¹ They are thought of as the code of a superior group — the we-group, or in-group — and this involves their comparison with the codes of other groups — the out-group, or others-group — to the disadvantage of the latter. This group-egotism, which, among other things, causes so many peoples to denominate themselves “Men,” as distinguished from the rest of the world, who do not measure up to that exalted title, is called ethnocentrism.

The reason why the rest fall short of “us” is because of their strange ways far more than for any other pecu-

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 21.

liarity, for example, of physique. Ethnocentrism is thus a specifically human sentiment. It enters to strengthen the local code of mores as the distinguishing character of the group, and to promote intolerance and hostility as respects the ways of others. "Each group thinks its own folkways the only right ones, and if it observes that other groups have other folkways, these excite its scorn." Opprobrious epithets specify the differences, including the physical: Frog-feet; Robbers; Tongued (with a block in the lower lip, like a second tongue); Beheaders; Flatheads; Cut-cheeks; Naked; Liars; Guest-vituperators; Woman-caressers; Apes; Devils; Hungry Ones; Pig-eaters; Cow-eaters; Uncircumcised; Jabberers. A galaxy of derisive terms could be gathered in our own society and time: Blue-nose; Bog-trotter; Dago; Dutchy; Geezer (Portuguese); Greaser; Gringo; Boche; Sheeny; Yid; Hunkie; Bohunk; Guinea; Wop. Such epithets have been invented to mark the exponents of uncongenial mores, racial, national, or sectional. Thus "ethnocentrism leads a people to exaggerate and intensify everything in their own folkways which is peculiar and which differentiates them from others. It therefore strengthens the mores."¹

It will have been noted that the differences which catch the eye and are thus held up to contempt are often wholly trivial and inessential. Diversity in language is prominent among these; ignorant people take the attitude, so graphically portrayed in *Huckleberry Finn*,² that a human being has no excuse for not

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 15.

² Clemens, S. L. (Mark Twain), *Huckleberry Finn*, end Chap. XIV.

talking in the way human beings were meant to talk, that is, as "we" do. Other tongues are those of "barbarians," who merely babble inarticulately. A certain fussy type of British book-reviewer specializes in small-caliber snipings at "Americanisms."

"During the war, an American general and a French colonel tried an experiment. The American had in his division a negro regiment from the South; the French officer commanded a Senegalese regiment. The two regiments were resting in neighboring villages, and the negroes eyed each other apparently with much curiosity. The general and the colonel decided to arrange a 'party,' to bring their men together and have an 'all-black understanding.' A big barrack was made ready, coffee, wine, and biscuits were provided, and the meeting was organized. At first it looked as if it were going to be a great success. Black Senegalese and black Carolinians mixed with enthusiasm, shook hands, drank toasts, and expressed great pleasure at being together. But after half an hour, things took a different turn. The American negroes all withdrew to one end of the big hall, the French negroes to the other end. When the colonel asked a man in the American regiment why they did not get on with the Senegalese, he replied, 'They have been polite all right, but they are just savages. They do not know a word of English.' And to a similar question put by the colonel to one of his own men, a Senegalese answered, 'Li sauvages, li pas parler français.' Even the common color was not a strong enough bond to make them overcome the difficulty of having different languages and, consequently, different attitudes."¹

Again, it is what other people eat that rouses loathing and ire. Ancient Greek and American Indian alike despised the "Raw-eaters" (*Omophagoi*; *Eskimantsic*, from which "Eskimo"); and the Palaungs of Farther India agree with the English sailor as to the low nature of a "Frog-eater."² Snail-eating is scarcely human

¹ Faÿ, B., "The Course of French-American Friendship," in *Yale Review*, XVIII, 452-453.

² Milne, L., *Home of an Eastern Clan*, p. 195.

to some, and cannibalism loathsome to most peoples; fish-eating made the Nutkas of Vancouver hated by the inland tribes who subsisted on flesh.¹ Clay, once a table delicacy, is eaten only by "low" geophagists. A certain tribe in Brazil sums the matter of differences up in extending the word *kura* ("we," "all of us," "ours") to signify "good," while *kurapa* ("not we," "not ours") is the term also for "bad," "greedy," "unwholesome." They add: "All ill comes from the outside, not least sickness and death, which are sent by alien sorcerers." Certain Sumatrans believe that illnesses arise from relations with people outside the tribe.²

As others of the mores come into account, the range of ethnocentrism widens. It is part of our own ethnocentrism that we regard primitive peoples as "lower races," and their beliefs as "superstitions." We have not hesitated to interfere unintelligently with their social arrangements, scorn their religious beliefs as benighted, and superciliously reveal to them "the truth"—that is, our own convictions and ways. This has then led to protective concealments and evasions by natives which have stood in the way of sincere and tolerant investigators. The story of contact³ between the civilized and uncivilized is an unedifying tale of arrogant ethnocentrism on the part of the former. The uncivilized, as is not so well known because they are less articulate, have their own opinions about the relative validity and value of their mores as

¹ *N. Y. Times* (May 23, 1923).

² Von den Steinen, *Zentral-Brasilien*, pp. 332-333; "Die Kubus von Sumatra," in *Globus*, XXVI, 46.

³ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Contact."

compared with the codes which are presented to them as superior.

Says an eminent scientist¹ who came to America as a youth:

"My imported point of view was as annoying as my red fez. It brought me all sorts of ridicule. For instance, once I said: 'To milk cows is a woman's job, but to teach boys and girls is a man's job.' I was ridiculed and told that in this country it was just the opposite, and before long I found that this country was right. I knew that my point of view would not go in this country, and I started to get the correct point of view, and I got it. But it was not as easy as discarding my red fez and buying an American hat to replace it. . . . That red fez got me into trouble as soon as I got on Broadway and met the bootblacks. It was contrary to the accepted notions of the land to wear a red fez, and so they knocked it down. I fought successfully for my right to wear it, but two weeks later I got rid of it and bought myself an American hat, and immediately I got along better."

We may prohibit certain mixed marriages; but our morals in that respect, as well as in others, sadly disillusioned three San Blas Indians, of Central America, who spent six years in American Schools. "They were particularly disgusted with the intermarriage of Americans with other nationalities and said that their own tribe was far superior in this respect. Absolute purity of blood was maintained by them and intermarriage discouraged by the death penalty. Their women remain hidden from sight of visitors and none of the latter is allowed in the San Blas villages after nightfall."²

To Edward VII's coronation was despatched, by the King of Uganda, the Katikiro, or prime minister, of the kingdom. The envoy was to set down his impressions of English life for his master's information. Apropos of dancing, he had his secretary record the following: "I thought it was very wrong for a man and woman to hold on to one another and dance together; these dances are like the bait which is on a fish-hook. However, each nation has its

¹ M. I. Pupin, quoted in *N. Y. Times* (April 29, 1923).

² *N. Y. Times* (April 13, 1913; Oct. 30, 1929).

own customs; but I do not think every one approves of this custom."¹ This is somewhat reminiscent of the story of Kipling,² entitled "One View of the Question."

In 1926, at a Lutheran rally, a protest was lodged against one of the stanzas of the hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," because it cast aspersions upon the good people of Ceylon, where "every prospect pleases, And only man is vile"; where "The heathen in his blindness Bows down to wood and stone." The protest runs: "It is not a fair statement to make that in Ceylon Isle men are vile. . . . There are vile men, for that matter, all over the world. I am sorry that Bishop Heber ever wrote that poem." The stanza was expurgated.³

As an example of ethnocentrism, the work of a certain early American illustrator of Milton's "Paradise Lost" stands forth. He "represented the fallen angels as clad like British red-coats while the heavenly host wore the garb of the Continental army."⁴ Its equal in futility is found only, perhaps, in the worship of the Nordic Type or among the Germans who went to extravagant lengths, prior to and during the late war, in extolling the unique qualities of their race, as well as in sneering at the "Latin temperament."

Adverse judgments on others and their ways, often totally irrational, have contributed not a little, with the proper opportunities, to the attempt to eradicate both mores and men. And ethnocentrism as a factor

¹ Ham Mukasa, "England seen through African Eyes," excerpt in *Booklovers' Magazine* (Feb., 1905), V, 220.

² In *Many Inventions*.

³ *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 25, 1926).

⁴ Seymour, *Life in the Homeric Age*, p. 29.

securing loyalty to code is supported by another agency, also ethnocentric and still farther removed from rational test: religion. In their origin, as foregoing passages have indicated, the mores arise entirely apart from the religious beliefs, which come eventually to sanction them. Having become the prosperity-policy of the society, they are inculcated by those in the society who possess the chief influence, that is, by the old; for the elders, the repositories of tradition, those who remember, have ever been the guardians of the mores. Then the aged die and become beings of a superior power. In accordance with the prevailing views of the future life, they are supposed still to cling to the ways which they approved while among the living, and still to be ready to lend their power to suppress departures from those ways. Their power is now infinitely greater than it was in life, however redoubtable it might then have been; hence the supreme sanction, that of ghost-fear, is added to the mores, thus securing their persistence and their arbitrary quality. "If asked why they act in a certain way in certain cases, primitive people always answer that it is because they and their ancestors always have done so. . . . The ghosts of ancestors would be angry if the living should change the ancient folkways." ¹

This attitude toward the code reënforces the ethnocentric and engenders towards other codes a hostility whose driving agency is not alone group-vanity but also the fanatic fear and devotion connected with relations with the supernatural. The religious sanction of the mores is so powerful and engrossing that in

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 1.

the case of group-conflicts the divergence of the mores which lay at the root of hostility has often been lost sight of by the actors and even by historians, in the collision of the respective religions that sanction these mores. Consider the Crusades and the wars against the Moors. Many a "holy war" has had very mundane impulses beneath its ostensible piety. Not infrequently in missionary enterprise of the past the essential difference between a "lower" and a "higher" people, between "heathen," "pagan" (both terms meaning "rustic"), and others, has been taken to lie in the type of sanction accorded the mores rather than in the mores themselves. Attempts have been made to alter the sanction of the mores, when the mores themselves form the only real point of attack.

Both ethnocentrism and religious creed, as forming an attitude of mind making for hostility to other codes, are essentially irrational. It is by this quality that they show their primeval character; they have been in and of the mores since remote times — though it must be added of religion that it takes a developed and systematized faith to show what thoroughgoing intolerance is.

NATURE OF THE CONFLICT

Perennially fanned by elemental factors of this order, group-conflict has never ceased, and it is unthinkable that it should cease while there are wants toward whose satisfaction men must strive, but for whose universal satisfaction there is an insufficiency of means in the world. Thus are the exponents of diverging codes of mores led into unceasing conflict with one another.

This struggle may take place in diverse ranges — military, industrial, political, legal — and it is of various degrees of intensity. War, resulting in the annihilation of one group by another, is the primordial agency of selection in the mores, and probably the most efficient that has ever existed. It is after the order of natural selection. War, however, presently issues in subjection rather than destruction; and subjection is not of a single type, entailing always the same degree of surrender of mores on the part of the subjugated. A conquest may be succeeded by enslavement, which generally runs down into milder forms of subjection, such as exclusion from certain social privileges and benefits. We shall work down through this series so far as it may seem profitable.

Before a decisive test of conflict comes, the variations in the mores of two groups may have decided its issue in advance. One of them may be hopelessly handicapped. There are such things as harmful mores¹ — customs which have developed or persisted in the absence of a decisive competition and test. For instance, among some of the South American Indian tribes, which were apparently in decline, the doctrine prevailed that the old men should have the young wives and the young men the older.² It seems that nothing short of conflict can select out such variations; it is sometimes said that “invention is the motive power and environment the selective factor,” but if environment means merely physical nature, its selective power is in any case very slow-working. Where,

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, §§ 28, 29, 65.

² Von den Steinen, *Zentral-Brasilien*, p. 331; Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub “Old men get young wives.”

however, group-conflict has been persistent, the path of history is strewn with discarded codes. Selection has taken place. Mores which have been superseded in the evolution of conflicting races — polyandry, the mother-family, cannibalism, incest — are still found persisting under isolation, or reappear with isolation. If certain mores physically or numerically weaken a group, or impair its organization, rendering it ever so little inferior to other groups, this fact, which may remain long concealed under isolation, is revealed at once when conflict arises. Such revelation has been, in history, one of the typical functions of war.

It is probable that the salient and characteristic features of all prevailing codes of mores represent the residue from such rude tests, involving the elimination of many variant codes. Milder forms of selection seem never to have got clean-cut results; but the war-selection has been scarcely less rigorous and pitiless than that which has produced the adjustments of plants and animals.

If two tribes, *A* and *B*, having sharp differences in their mores, *x* and *y*, are at war with each other, and if *A* wins and all the members of *B* are put to death, there is an end to the code *y*. Such annihilation, the most drastic form of selection, probably occurred repeatedly, on the small scale, among savages who took no prisoners. Divine injunctions to the ancient Hebrews prescribed that sort of root-and-branch destruction. However, since the mores of simple peoples are pretty much alike, even the utter extirpation of *B* could have meant no more than the elimination of features of *y* not represented in *x*; thus, if *y* included cannibalism, which was offensive to *A*, then, so far as *B*'s influence in perpetuating and extending the practice was concerned, cannibalism was eliminated. It is logical enough that peculiarities of the mores should perish along with their sponsors; but if even a few members of *B* should survive and remain

thereafter undisturbed, *y* would be neither destroyed nor changed. *B* would go on with cannibalism.

The assumption of annihilation of groups and their mores is theoretical and extreme. Probably even the Israelites fell short of their god's mandate. Pompey and Cæsar must have left some few of the pirates in the eastern Mediterranean alive, even if discouraged. What actually happened to the conquered in war was that all the men were killed or part of them were adopted, as among the Iroquois, while the surviving women and children were carried off as a species of booty; or all the survivors were enslaved in the land of the victors; or they were subjugated, under the victors' rule, in their own land. Adoption or enslavement, except for small children—and even they would learn their tribal ways from their mothers—does not put an end to the mores of the conquered, for the mores of adults are exceedingly deep-rooted and stubbornly held, being a kind of “second nature,” unconsciously followed. Nevertheless, overwhelming defeat is a disintegrating shock, and if it is followed up by oppression, misery, and hopelessness, the spirit of the vanquished may be weakened so that they become submissive and resigned to the abandonment of mores hitherto dear to them.

Collisions on the large scale cannot occur where population is sparse; even diffusion of mores is difficult. This is another aspect of the correlation between numbers and the development of civilization, to which reference has been made, for without the conflicts of groups there can be no decisive selection, whereby inferior adjustments, such as counting on the fingers,

are replaced by more expedient ones — the evidence of their one-time prevalence remaining only in survivalistic form, as in the decimal system. Here again we can see why civilization began where it did and note that the great conquests and enduring empires have been confined to certain geographical regions. To the forms of selection that ensue upon conquest we shall presently return.

Selection in the mores through the death of their adherents is not confined to inter-group conflict; it occurs within societies whose external relations are peaceful. Religious mores have been uprooted through the eradication of sects; and divergences from the accepted codes, if they are wide enough, are regarded even now as deserving extinction through the capital punishment of those who practice them.

The destiny of such non-conforming elements approaches that of the unfit in nature; they are removed from the society through isolation behind the bars or in more drastic manner. If the rebels against the code are numerous enough, there may come about in the society a split into two hostile parts, an upheaval of civil strife and a reversion to primordial methods of selection. It must be realized that at any stage of the selective process violence and bloodshed may reënter.

In fact, all forms of compulsion within the group are reducible to violence and killing in the end. Behind the power of the courts, the police, and the rest of the regulative organization of a society lies the force of the army, and, ultimately, of a predominant section of the group-members, mobilized for mortal combat in civil war. It is salutary to keep this consideration in mind

as a background, as one moves into modified or derived forms of selection. And upon such an upheaval or revolution there attends a selection so rigorous as to result sometimes in a "new dispensation." A society may be so profoundly stirred that the results reach far beyond the settlement of the issue over which conflict has arisen; for all the various parts of the structure of society are intimately connected one with the other, and the "strain toward consistency"¹ in the mores brings it about that no considerable change can take place in one set of societal forms without modifying the whole structure. Let one consider the elimination of measures and men and the change in the society at large that followed upon the American Civil War, or even the Spanish War. When there is a fierce and protracted conflict, as in the French Revolution and its sequels, recounters regularly find in it a "turning-point in history." Thereafter the world is not the same.

Where group conflict is to the death, selection among variations in the mores is relatively speedy and sure; and the occasional catastrophe or ferocious conflict of later ages reveals the presence of inexorable, elemental forces beneath all societal life. But as the mores develop and civilization advances, on the whole and relatively the test becomes decreasingly searching, eliminative, and decisive. Not only are the sanctions of life and death displaced but, even where they still remain, their incidence is often determined by the erratic mind of man rather than by the "errorless" forces of nature. Let us consider the effect of the increase of civilization on the character of selection.

¹ Pp. 141 ff. below; Sumner, *Folkways*, § 5.

BLUNTED SELECTION

The apparatus of civilization is calculated to shield men from the action of natural selection; to interpose a bulwark between them and the physical environment; to ease up the conditions of the struggle for existence. The highest civilization develops the human type farthest removed from the "nature-man"; it thwarts the action of natural selection most thoroughly; it shows the greatest "power over nature." Whole series of factors by which natural selection operates in the non-human organic world are eliminated, at least in large degree: famine, cold, physical conflict between individuals, unrestricted birth rate, and so on. The environment is artificialized, physical competition is lessened, the conditions of strife are so altered as to remove the advantage which the fit under nature would enjoy. There is no real struggle for existence; for even if one sits by inertly, he will yet be kept alive by society.

If we take a reverse direction and go down, instead of up, the scale of civilization, we see impediments to the action of natural selection dropping progressively away till we get to the primitive people who live practically under its sway. The effectiveness of natural selection varies inversely as the height of civilization.

Natural selection develops the man-animal with specialized mental adaptability; this quality works out into the folkways and mores; then these latter operate to exempt man from natural forms of selection, by developing a societal selection which spares those who would not be spared under nature (counterselec-

tion).¹ It is possible to take a line of approach from which, starting with natural selection, we seem to arrive by inevitable transitions straight at its opposite. A realization of what truth there is in such a contention helps to sharpen the conception of how selection changes in mode as it accompanies the advance of civilization.

Primitive people handle group-members who transgress the mores with savage inexorability. The death-penalty is common, and it is often inflicted with refinements of cruelty. Expulsion from the group is practically equivalent to execution, for the only right to life men have is measured by the number and power of their avengers, which means their fellow group-members; stray wanderers are fallen upon and killed or enslaved. One's whole family and property may be "eaten up" for what strikes us as a trivial offense against custom. The sinner — for breach of the mores is also a sin against the ghosts — is a peril to the community, and all the rest hasten to dispose of him in order to save themselves. Vindictive terror in the judges makes the sentence drastic beyond all reason, that is, beyond all proportion to the offense, as we see it. Motives do not count, nor does ignorance of the law, nor extreme provocation, nor even that the sinner is a small child. The witch-doctor "smells out" the culprit and he is instantly dispatched. Our "extenuating circumstances" do not figure any more than they would in the case of a rattlesnake.

Selection has softened now that the mores have come to include elements, like the high valuation or "sacredness" of human life, which were not in them in earlier

¹ Ch. VII, below.

stages. Then these mores, possessing "the authority of facts," have "become capable of producing inferences" resulting in developments of the code which, it would seem, must ultimately be selected away. For instance, along with the advance of civilization there has developed a sentimentality which is, in many of its manifestations, pure weak-mindedness. Ethical philosophers, removed from contact with the facts of life, have evolved, as inferences, a set of ideals and dogmas about human relations which they have succeeded in putting into the minds of the emotional and susceptible. The latter are prosperous enough to pay without much self-sacrifice for the sensation of rectitude which they experience in living in accord with these noble sentiments; or, rather, they are able to make those "forgotten men" pay who do not agree, or who are too fully occupied in the struggle for a living to have much time for sentimentalizing.

These arbiters of ethics and their uncritical following raise horrified outcries at the imposition of the death penalty, at the public lashing of a wife-beater, at the insistence upon an adequate discipline in schools. They make the home a hothouse instead of a toughening training school for life, turning loose upon society undisciplined products prone to disregard the rights of their fellows in society as they have overridden under indulgence the rights of their fellows in the home. Sentimentalists, warm of heart, but soft of head, petition complaisant executives¹ to let loose upon society the wolves that have, at long length, been trapped. The pseudo-heroic and pathetic aspects of the life of a

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 23, 1926).

black-hearted criminal are rehearsed during interminable legal processes until he seems to be a martyr, and the just judge who condemns him a persecutor and a brute. All this is done by volatile spirits under the illusion that they are thereby conserving the delicacy of the "ethical sense," or what not, instead of proving recreant to plain duties as members and supporters of civilized society.

What sort of selection is this? Seen in its more pronounced forms it seems to reverse the findings of science and of sense in favor of an aimless emotionalism. One is ready to believe that there is in modern civilization nothing analogous to the elimination of what is unfit.

There has been much agitation around the civilized world for the abolition of the death-penalty. One recalls the reputed reply of Talleyrand to such a proposition: "*Que messieurs les assassins commencent!*" Those who assert that execution is not a deterrent ought to realize that it at least deters the person executed; also that prisons have to be paid for out of taxes levied upon people who are behaving themselves, and many of whom need all they earn for themselves and their families. If it is stated that life-sentences are better because of a faulty legal process, then the answer is that the process had better be the point of attack; that the abolition of the penalty is no more than evasion. The issue is not to be argued out here; it is merely pointed out. It will appear in another connection, in considering the "right to life."¹

This idea of the right to life has turned up, now and then, in connection with the question of preserving by all medical means the existence of a hopelessly defective baby or of a slowly and painfully dying person. In the elder world, such sufferers were speeded on their way. Nowadays there is a storm of protest ready to break over the devoted head of anyone who advocates their release, despite the designation of such a case as "something less than

¹ Pp. 135-136, below.

murder.”¹ Mrs. Wharton, in a story entitled “The Fruit of the Tree,” offers a serious study of the mores, wherein a nurse who shortens a friend’s sufferings pays the penalty. Meanwhile white slavers, who accomplish much more than the bodily destruction of their victims, get short sentences.²

Now and then a judge will dare to come out for the old-fashioned punishments; Governor Baldwin, of Connecticut, once stated that he was more in sympathy with the “classical school of penology” than with the “new or noisier one, mainly made up of sentimental humanitarians or theoretical psychologists.” He believed that a wife-beater, a burglar who uses torture, or a procurer ought to be whipped; it was a shorter, sharper, and also less expensive punishment, and might be the salvation of a man as well as of a child. “When in use in Connecticut, no white man was ever whipped twice. He had learned his lesson.” He favored sterilization also, and severely criticized the laxness of parole boards, which have been denominated by another judge, “sob sister boards.”³ Mr. Taft⁴ speaks of the maudlin sentiment expended by many people upon the inmates of our prisons. “The penitentiary is a place for punishment and reformation. It is not a rest cure or a summer hotel. . . . I have no doubt that prison discipline can be improved; but changes based on the theory that convicted criminals are disguised heroes who only need an appeal to their honor and freedom from restraint to make them good citizens will have humiliating but perhaps instructive results.” Americans, says the British Lord Chancellor, treat criminals too kindly; he is not impressed by the indeterminate sentence. The coddled convict finds prison alluring; he gets more amusement than the honest laboring man. “I have reached a point,” said Mayor Walker, of New York City, “where I am getting tired of all this maudlin sympathy in behalf of hardened criminals. . . . I think greater consideration is due the people

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 9, 1925). Not long ago, in England, a man who, with her consent, killed his mother to save her suffering, was acquitted.

² *N. Y. Times* (April 13, 1921). The judge stated that the accused was “the worst kind of human vermin in existence,” and the implication was that he would like to have treated him as such.

³ *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 4, 1912; Feb. 4, 1925).

⁴ In “Ethics in Service,” 1916, quoted by *The Nation* (N. Y., May 19, 1916), p. 548. See “Attica Prison to be Convict’s Paradise,” in *N. Y. Times* (Aug. 2, 1931).

who form the very backbone of our citizenship. . . . This fashion of wasting sympathy on felons and giving little or no thought to the more decent elements of our city is growing tiresome." Any reader of the newspapers, with their imbecile letters to and about some cold-blooded murderer, knows what the Mayor means. He knows also that the prison population is increasing all the time and that the costs of prisons and their maintenance is becoming formidable.¹

Sterilization laws have been passed in several states, but public sentiment has prevented much use of them. In one case, a prominent proponent of such a law advised a physician-friend not to perform the operation, unless he was looking for a good deal of trouble. The fact that a person may ask for this operation, realizing that his difficulty is sexual, makes small difference to those who know, by revelation, that it is "wrong" to interfere with nature and natural rights.² A majority of the United States Supreme Court upheld, in 1927, the validity of the Virginia sterilization law. Justice Holmes, who wrote the opinion, stated the usual cogent arguments for operating on the feeble-minded, and drew the analogy with compulsory vaccination.³

No accusation of insincerity is lodged against any of these people who are so sure that they are right; the protest is against irrationality and an indisposition to consider matters on their cold merits. "I believe," writes Thackeray, in *The Four Georges*, "it is by persons believing themselves in the right that nine-tenths of the tyranny of this world has been perpetrated. Arguing on that convenient premiss, the Dey of Algiers would cut off twenty heads of a morning; Father Dominic would burn a score of Jews in the presence of the Most Catholic King, and the Archbishops of Toledo and Salamanca sing Amen. Protestants were roasted, Jesuits hung and quartered at Smithfield, and witches burnt at Salem, and all by worthy people, who believed they had the best authority for their actions. . . . Without doubt the American war was popular in England. In 1775 the address in favor of coercing the colonies was

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Aug. 9, 1925; April 16, 1926; March 25, 1927; Aug. 5 and 6, 1926; Feb. 5, 1928).

² Survey of sterilization laws in *Journal Social Hygiene*, IX (May, 1923), pp. 316-318; Popenoe, P., "Sterilization in California," in *Journal Social Hygiene*, XIII, 257 ff., and succeeding articles; *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 1, 1922).

³ *N. Y. Times* (May 3, 1927).

carried by 304 to 105 in the Commons, by 104 to 20 in the House of Lords. Popular? — so was the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes popular in France: so was the massacre of St. Bartholomew: so was the Inquisition exceedingly popular in Spain."

Sentimentalists are always proclaiming that "force does nothing." That is nonsense. Force of some sort is what does everything. And if it is military force, or violence, that is meant, it is yet possible, while hating and fearing war, to show that it has accomplished much in the way of societal adjustment that nothing else could have done.¹ It is true that we have succeeded in substituting trade for war, and have built up barriers against the unrestricted sweep of natural forces. But one should not lose sight, in his elation at this, of the fact that the natural processes underlie all others and cannot be cavalierly set aside. What stage-strutting human beings are likely to forget is that they remain at last analysis the playthings of the irresistible forces of nature. The ground shakes a little, and thousands perish; a relatively small volume of poisonous gas spills over the rim of a crater upon a town, and the inhabitants are no more; the brute passions of men break forth and they rage like primitive savages. Underneath the artificialized life of man, so long as he remains, in the last analysis, an animal — which, so far as can be seen, will be for all his days on earth — flow the ungovernable currents of nature, in strength unimpaired. Only by studying them and keeping out of their way, not by trying to banish or ignore them, may we profit ourselves.

Force is here; but it is not in our mighty minds. We

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "War."

must learn to utilize it if we can and to dodge it where we must. The presence of what look like senseless variations fathered by soft minds and sure to produce maladaptation to life-conditions, is proof of nothing except that either our unfavorable opinion of them is wrong or that selection is not yet in operation. If we wait till the prosperity declines and the pinch comes, this doubt will be resolved for us.

Selection of the mores through the annihilation of those who practice them is largely replaced, as civilization advances, by a mixed form, whereby together with the destruction of some of the vanquished goes the subjection of others. This form has characterized all antecedent ages; very many wars, whatever their ostensible causes, have been fought over the mores. The campaigns against piracy, from Roman times down to the conflicts of the Spanish against the Moros of the Philippines, are cases in point; so is the series of conflicts fought to destroy the slave trade and the slavery system. In cases of this kind, however, selection of the mores does not go to the full limit of annihilation; only so much of destruction is necessary as will reduce the strength of the adherents of certain mores, or will in such manner unfavorably alter the conditions under which they must pursue the struggle for existence as to lead to a modification of their offensive ways. Physical collision and killing as a mode of selection of the mores are a sort of last resort in these days, called for when other forms of attack are seen to have been of no avail.

The other broad alternative of the struggle between the adherents of different codes of mores is subjection. In so far as the outcome of this strife is life or death, in

so far is the ensuing selection found to be peremptory and thorough, resembling that in nature. But when the competition comes to have as its outcome on the one side mastery and on the other enslavement, manifestly the selection of the mores cannot be so thoroughgoing and rigorous. Some of the mores of the conquered are sure to last on, for the intolerance of the victors must have its limits of vigilance if not of intent; in fact, certain of the mores of the subjugated might well be of a superior order, although in their *ensemble* they might have been proved inexpedient under the test forced upon them.

CLASS-CONFLICT AND AMALGAMATION

Conquest with enslavement creates the compounded group, and we have class-conflict rather than group-conflict. This is a developed form, for a type of societal organization must be somewhat advanced in order to render enslavement possible. In general, the case as respects the mores would run something like this. In the conflict that led to subjection, two sets of mores have met and one set has been proved, to its adherents at least, superior. Through conquest the prosperity-policy of the prevailing group has been vindicated. The conquerors have only satisfaction in their own system and contempt for the one whose adherents have fallen before them; compare the scorn of nomadic victors for subjugated industrial peoples. It cannot be thought, on the other hand, that the conquered will regard their adverse fate as a condemnatory test of their code; this would assume a degree of analytical power not to be found under such conditions. Rather will they seek the

alibi and the excuse, like the Crusaders, who were put to it to understand the failure of their pious enterprise; or they will refer disaster to the inexplicable, and so to some supernatural agency.¹

Victors and vanquished are just as mutually hostile the day after the conquest as they were the day before, only they cannot go on expressing their enmity in the same way. The victors may continue to use force against those who can no longer resist in kind, suppressing some of their mores once for all; conquerors have forbidden practices such as cannibalism under pain of death and they have often tried to suppress the language of the conquered. Selection has been accomplished in such manner; in the course of time the refractory have been bent or broken and the less stubborn have given up many of their own ways to adopt those of their masters. Ridicule, an assault on vanity, one of the most sensitive of human traits, has always played an important part in getting rid of disapproved practices. By the time the next generation comes to maturity, many of the mores discouraged by the powerful may be gone and forgotten. The prestige of those in power also affects the case, for their ways are imitated, entailing the replacement of the mores of the imitators.

Class-amalgamation, here treated from a standpoint of interest in the process of selection, may strike the reader as a case of transmission of the mores. The two categories run into one another readily enough. If, however, an adjustment new to a set of men is presented to them as the result of contact, whether forced or not, with aliens, that revelation amounts, for them, to the

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 6.

appearance in the field of a variation which becomes subject to selection, automatic or in some degree conscious. It was sensible enough of the white man, for instance, to adopt the Eskimo dress in an arctic environment. It has been seen that the victors may enforce the elimination of whatever practices they think abhorrent or likely to interfere with the stability of their rule; they have the power, in so far as they have reduced their antagonists and disarmed them. But victors are often inferior to the vanquished, culturally as well as in numbers. Under conditions of peace, which way will selection run? Will the more cultured mores be eliminated, simply because they are the code of the war-vanquished? History does not show that result. What happens is that the codes melt together by the elimination of items on both sides. When this has been done, however, there has been a vast deal of elimination.

History is full of illustrations. Though the Romans were implacable to druidism, they put no actual pressure on the Gauls to adopt anything in particular. They let the situation take care of whatever items did not constitute a threat to Roman rule, that is, they let the automatic process take its course. That course led to the giving up, by the Gauls, of their language and many other of their mores, as inconvenient under the change of life-conditions. For the coming of the Romans meant the introduction of much into the environment for which the Gauls did not even have names. Should they invent new ones for the new things, or adopt the Roman terms? And where they had only primitive adjustments in trade and elsewhere in practical life, should they stick to them, in the face of the prospect of gain by entering into the new dispensation, or give them up in favor of the adjustments which civilization had already worked out in dealing with a more complex life? It is well known that they found their advantage, whether they figured it

out or not, in becoming Roman citizens. It became their boast that they were such. This is but one illustration of the tendency of imitation to flow toward the culturally strong; the adoption of Chinese culture by the Manchus, that of the vanquished by the victors, is another. Always in transmission there is replacement, which means selection of what is replaced.

Conquest, in fact, by moving groups into close proximity, brings about an opportunity for transmission that did not exist before. There ensues a fusion, or diffusion, which is something quite different from clean-cut selection such as occurs where conquest is succeeded by annihilation. As some see it, we say, selection is here replaced by transmission. This is not so. Not every item of culture possessed by two societies brought into the relation of victor and vanquished is diffused. What the two have to offer one another amounts to variations upon which the compounded society is to pass. Like other variations, they persist or do not persist. In so far as there is a world-society today, that society is accepting or rejecting ideas and practices that originate in this or that nation. What has happened is that, with larger numbers in contact, more and more items are offered for acceptance or rejection, that is, for selection. Large groups are now doing what smaller ones once did — in fact, what individuals once did, when the mores were forming: imitating some things, refusing and discarding others. Many ideas and practices are being eliminated all the time. Selection is still marching on.

The exact manner in which two sets of mores belonging to two sections of a compounded group will eliminate one another, or fuse, cannot be predicted; it depends

upon the interplay of many interests, which can never be the same in any two cases. But it is certain that the process must have been easier under primitive conditions, for the codes of neighboring peoples were not very diverse. There was not so much of the new to learn nor yet so many divergences to harmonize. To the reader of ethnography, one of the most striking impressions is that of the essential likeness of savage life and habitudes, not only within the same region or continent but all over the world; it goes without saying that the mores of two Congo tribes could more readily unite to form a composite than those of two civilized nations. The result of advance in civilization is differentiation of groups and the development of distinctions between their codes. Intolerance and attempted eradication of another religion, for example, are scarcely to be found upon the primitive stage. Even more difficult would be assimilation as between the codes of a savage and of a civilized group.

And so generalizations from cases of amalgamation cannot give us more than vague outlines of the process. In any case it is the demonstration of the fact of selection rather than its details that interests us in the present connection. If we consider cases of successful amalgamation, we can see what has had to go, to bring it about. Spencer has a good deal to say of the effect of homogeneity in strengthening the social bond:¹ the best conditions exist where the environment and race-character are of a similar type, where there is a bond of blood, real or fictitious, where similar religious ideas and sentiments prevail. "Joint exposure to uni-

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, II, §§ 450, 451.

form external actions, and joint reactions against them, have from the beginning been the leading causes of union among members of societies." But this homogeneity has had to be attained by elimination of a greater or less degree of heterogeneity in the mores. Gumplowicz,¹ doubtless with Austro-Hungarian conditions in mind, insists upon the importance of a common language in securing amalgamation of ethnic elements. Language, he says, must first fall a sacrifice to the advancing group-sense — which he calls "syngenism" — for only by common speech are men "men" to one another. Religion, he says, is more stubborn, but when it has once fallen, a great barrier is gone. The case of the Moriscos and Jews in Spain is illustrative of the persistence of the religious barrier. Intermarriage, followed by community of blood, comes last, since the greatest conservatism and tendency to segregation reside here. This author adds to community of language, religion, and blood also community of culture and education and of material interests as providing the necessary conditions of social amalgamation.

The fact of selection in the mores succeeding the compounding of groups, whatever the method or order followed, is observable in all cases. As the groups have become amalgamated into one, changes appearing in the industrial organization, religion, language, etc., betray the fact that, without much conscious effort, some of the mores of the combining groups have been discarded and others generally adopted, thus creating a new code different from either of the originals. If there is a recompounding with smaller conquered ele-

¹ *Der Rassenkampf*, pp. 249 ff.

ments, the prevailing code gradually secures extension, showing contributions and substitutions from the mores of the conquered, but in the main remaining characteristic. There comes about a relatively bloodless selection in the folkways by which certain of them prevail against others.

THE PEACE-GROUP

Such a society is an enlarged peace-group. This conception, though not this name, has been before us for some time. The peace-group, a precondition to all the milder forms of competition and selection between the mores, is composed of members who have enough interests in common to allow of peaceful competition — for instance, litigation — and also some degree of coöperation rather than violent conflict in the realization of interests. Its members have a common code — common, that is, in the essentials; there is no conflict over the vital things, for they are assumed in the common code, and disputes over minor matters can be carried on, generally, without breach of the peace by recourse to fighting. "Men will always fight," it is said, "if they are mad enough"; but in this case, the matters concerning which they could get mad enough are agreed upon in advance by all fellow-members, so that they do not have to be fought about within the group; and over issues of less weight passion does not run so high.

No one ever set out to invent a peace-group, under a "social contract." It is a typically spontaneous, automatic, and impersonal development, and one with a very high survival-value; for it is by peace and order

within that a society is enabled to resist destruction or to concentrate its strength in the pursuit of its interests against competitors. Thus the peace-group may be taken to be as old as humanity, or even older, for animals form true societies; it appears in history, however, as a modification of a prior régime of violence. What we actually see in history is a progressive restriction on violence, both as between individuals and classes within the same society and also as between societies. The very prohibition of violence witnesses to the priority of violence. The general tendency, where we know war to have been the mode, has been in the direction of milder methods; there is no general or steady tendency in the opposite direction; and so the conflict by violence appears to be a heritage from the antique world. War is often spoken of as a reversion. Nations, even when at war, take pains to cast the odium of recourse to such a savage expedient upon the enemy. Public opinion is against violence and in favor of peace; but that it was not always so can be gathered from the character of the heroes and divinities of olden time. Whether or not the primordial era was one of unmitigated violence, the extension of the peace-group, as seen in history, has represented a progressive modification of the ruder methods of conflict and competition.

Assume, now, a peace-group whose constituent elements are well unified, and which is at peace with its neighbors. Since no society can be perfectly homogeneous, the struggle goes on within; only, the internal issue as to the mores is concerned with less vital matters. It is a struggle between sub-groups or classes which accept and are protected by the broad code of their

union. Everyone, for instance, is guaranteed a right to life and does not have to be on guard against murder all the time. The mores of the several classes, partly traditional, partly adaptive,¹ subdivide until they reach lowest terms in the family mores. Each group has its code, containing its own peculiar elements and also others held in common with other fellow sub-groups, which form a basis for union, permanent or transitory, with those others. There is a conviction that the whole society's welfare depends upon the common code, and a loyalty to it and a partisanship arise, that constitute patriotism, a sentiment with high survival-value. Certain relatively few of the mores remain common to the whole society²; these are by the general consensus regarded as vital, and members of the society who violate them are excluded from societal life by execution, banishment, or imprisonment. As the constituent groups of a society are subdivided into their elements, each division shows a greater body of mores to which all its members are willing to conform, until fi-

¹ Pp. 99 ff., above and 327 ff., below.

² "The rights of conscience, the equality of all men before the law, the separation of church and state, religious toleration, freedom of speech and of the press, popular education, are vital traditions of the American people. They are not brought in question; they form the stock of firm and universal convictions on which our national life is based; they are ingrained into the character of our people and you can assume, in any controversy, that an American will admit their truth. But they form the sum of traditions which we obtain as our birthright. They are never explicitly taught to us, but we assimilate them in our earliest childhood from all our surroundings, at the fireside, at school, from the press, on the highways and streets. We never hear them disputed and it is only when we observe how difficult it is for some foreign nations to learn them that we perceive that they are not implanted by nature in the human mind. They are a part and the most valuable part of our national inheritance, and the obligation of love, labor, and protection which we owe to the nation rests upon these benefits which we receive from it." Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays*, pp. 353-354.

nally, in the family (the original peace-group), the number of mores accepted by all members reaches the maximum. These smaller groups have a number of mores peculiar to themselves, so that, for example, many of the mores of the sect receive no general societal recognition, and a number of those regarded as of importance inside the family are viewed with complete indifference outside. This relation of the mores to the size of groups can be covered by the proposition that the number of accepted mores in a group varies inversely with its size.

“In general, the size and extent of groups stands in an inverse relation to the number of common syngenetic elements [mores] in them; so that the more populous the group the fewer are the syngenetic feelings common within it. The strongest, the most concentrated, so to speak, of the syngenetic sentiments, which rest upon the largest number of common syngenetic elements, are those which unite the smallest groups. The greater the groups become, the weaker are these sentiments, since they rest upon an ever smaller number of such syngenetic elements.”¹

COMPETITION

All these sub-groups, the more homogeneous and coherent as they are smaller, are engaged in a competitive struggle for self-realization, under the general condition of unification within the state and satisfaction with the national code. Agreeing with respect to the latter — accepting it, in fact, without reflection — loyal citizens experience in the rest of the national life a series of collisions of minor interests: some want protectionism, others free trade; some an imperialistic policy, others the traditional policy of isolation. A

¹ Gumpłowicz, *Der Rassenkampf*, p. 249.

long series of interests, lined up for the fray, could be mentioned: labor *vs.* capital, debtors *vs.* creditors, gold-standardists *vs.* inflationists, suffragists *vs.* anti-suffragists, "wets" *vs.* "drys"; and, on the smaller scale, religious sects, secret societies, and local organizations of all descriptions maintain an unremitting competition among themselves. Viewed from this angle, national life is a seething arena of conflict, industrial, commercial, political, religious, moral, full of petty or more than petty triumphs and reverses, entailing extensions and eliminations of petty or more than petty codes of behavior.

Each smaller group is trying all the time to universalize its pet program, and there is always the possibility that it may acquire a following sufficient to raise its code into a prominence from which it can challenge some of the essentials of the national code. If, as a consequence, a conflict over essentials comes to pass, there is in prospect a selection that may demand revolution, probably violence, and so the suspension or even the destruction of the peace-status itself. Slavery in the South was for a long time a minor national issue; but it rose into prominence, got in among the essentials, so that the nation could not exist half-slave and half-free, and was finally eliminated by recourse to war. If any local issue works up into such prominence, it transcends peaceful settlement. People have become, with the successive thwarting of interests believed by them to be essential, angry enough to fight; and as yet there is no peaceful device that has stood the test as a substitute for violence.

Considering the state as a whole, the great majority

of its citizens unite to support the general, corporate interest against the relatively few recalcitrants who will not adapt themselves to the broad group-code. Public opinion is virtually nation-wide against the latter and their ways; and in their cases selection is decisive. Thus do the great majority of citizens in a civilized nation disapprove of polygamy or incest. But, whereas the body of the people agree and coöperate in matters of broad national interest, under the general code to which nearly all subscribe, beyond this point divergence of interests and dissent are the rule. Contentment over the provisions for what are conceived to be the paramount interests of all allows of peaceful competition and rivalry and admits of toleration, discussion, and compromise. Disagreement over this or that detail of the code does not become serious if all parties value its major provisions highly enough. One of the chief utilities of otherwise inane and trite exhortations to patriotism and loyalty — to “The Flag” as a symbol of the common interest (not a mere piece of colored cloth) — is that, by reiteration of these, the broad essentials of the common code and the need of supporting it are kept before people whose conflicting minor interests normally fill their horizons. They are made to realize, even though vaguely, that they and their interests are but part of a larger whole whose importance is of the greatest; and this and the tickling of their vanity help them to compose their local differences more readily.

Within the settled state the struggle between the exponents of divergent mores becomes, then, a different sort of competition from any we have yet viewed; and

its prizes and penalties of a contrasting and less vital order. Competition does not stop when violence is ruled out; it is only in the utopias of dreamers that it is eliminated. It can never cease, and this is well; for only with the realization of utopia would the race cease to have further need of the spur of necessity and of the stress which, through the ages, have made us move toward what we have become. This competition within the state is, in these times, in theory at least, no longer a struggle for existence, either of the individual or of the group; there are societal institutions and international codes whose business it is to interfere in the struggle short of that point.¹ Neither an individual nor a nation is allowed to starve to death. That mere existence is somehow assured is taken to be a fundamental fact; the struggle is not for existence but for a certain quality of existence; not for life, but for a standard of living.

Out of a form of competition thus mitigated no such clean-cut results can be expected as are found in nature. This struggle, in its separate cases that of the individual or family, is carried on in practice in some sort of wider association. There is an unending series of identifications of the individual or family interest with the interest of this or that group, be it gild, union, sect, party, class, or other. Let us take the class as the most typical and least special of these groupings of people with interests in common; it is also an elemental one, developing as it does out of the primordial master-slave differentiation. The interest of competing classes is, at bottom, a better standard of living — in the direct line of their

¹ P. 30, above.

class-mores, only idealized somewhat. There is a body of wants, common to all class-members, and there is a coöperative effort to obtain satisfaction of these wants.

RIGHTS

The right or claim to such satisfactions is the object of the struggle. We have a right to a thing when fellow-competitors who want it cannot or will not prevent us from gaining or keeping it. To avoid violence, it is a condition that the rest hold off and let us have it. Then a right has to be established in some way, litigation being the typical peace-group procedure. It has to be enforced by law or otherwise against fellow-competitors for satisfactions desired by many but not sufficient to supply all. Rights cannot exist where there are no fellow-competitors between whom claims to satisfaction are apportioned. On Crusoe's Island there was no occasion to define rights till Man Friday came. Rights are societal in origin and character. There is no such thing as a "natural" right; what are sometimes so-called are simply claims on society acquired so long ago and, among some sections of humanity, so strongly guaranteed and ingrained in the mores that they are no longer questioned.

The beginning of rights could not have lain elsewhere than in force, or in the fear of it. Their societal origin, like that of the mores in general, is so far back that it has been lost to sight and, as is the habit in such cases, is referred to God, to Nature, or to some semi-divine culture-hero who conferred them.¹

¹ The topic of rights is developed rather fully in Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, §§ 168-175.

MIGHT AND RIGHT

By way of clarifying briefly the relation between might and right, let us consider the often quoted jingle: Might makes Right. It is a double proposition, divisible into two, namely: Might makes What Is; and: What Is is Right. Despite the protests that "force makes nothing," most sensible persons would accept the former of these statements. As a matter of fact, while "Might" is taken here in a general sense, it is quite possible to assert, with mores and morals in mind, that the might of violence is at the bottom of their making and maintenance; for, in the end, people will fight for what they deem the "right" mores, morals, and institutions.

The trouble is with the second of these propositions, and it centers on the meaning of "right." There is "right," the opposite of "wrong"; there is "right" in the sense of "expedient"; and there is the noun "right" (Latin, *jus*), which, strictly speaking, is what we are talking about here. But let us give a moment to the adjectives.

One who has acquired knowledge of the mores realizes that they "can make anything right," as distinguished from wrong, "and prevent condemnation of anything." In the long run they must be also expedient, as adjustments; as soon as they cease so to be, they are on the road to replacement. Some of the mores are practically universal over the earth and through time, so that they give the impression of being indispensable to societal life — expedient to any society. Such is the *mos* of honesty, implied in the taboo: Thou shalt not steal (from a fellow group-member); if, in any society, the members kept plundering one another, the society could not last on, for, in its consequent state of uproar and violence, it would fall victim to the first disciplined competitor that it met. Such mores come as near to being permanent as any; but there is nothing absolute, in the philosophical sense, about them. Much less is there here any absolute standard of right and wrong; only as these terms mean "expedient" or "inexpedient" as adjustments, under the conditions, have the designations "right" and "wrong" any content or sense. To assert that some local code is "eternally right," that is, under all conditions, is merely an exhibition of ignorance. But does might, in making what is, always make the expedient? Not at all.

Mores may be in a state of untried variation, of triumphant tried prevalence, or of having been tried and found wanting. In the second case only are they of proved expediency. To say that whatever is, in the matter of mores and institutions, is expedient, ignores the existence both of variations, not yet passed upon by selection, most of which will certainly be selected away, and of customs that are in process of elimination. Nudism is being presented as a variation. Barter was expedient once, and still is, under certain circumstances. Slavery was unquestioned through a long stretch of human history, but its inexpediency under modern conditions is generally admitted now, even by those who once fought for it; might made it, but it is no longer deemed to be right; its inexpediency has come to father a moral judgment as to its eternal wrongness. To cover the case, one can say that all long-settled mores and institutions, which have steadily weathered selection without essential alteration, are, so long as conditions do not alter, proved to be expedient; and that in some few and important cases, it is unlikely that conditions will change. This is as far as one can go, on the evidence at hand.

But when it comes to might making and guaranteeing a right (the noun), it is possible to become quite positive. The might of society is always behind a right. The right to life, for instance, is not in nature at all. If it were, then all living things would have it. Some unworldly theorists believe they have, and carefully sweep the ground before them, lest they infringe the right of some worm; to others it is a sin to kill the parasites on their bodies. A sentimentalist declares that sparrows should not be slain, "on the moral ground that all living things are born with a God-given right to live,"¹ whereupon a scoffer suggests "chill-proof pants to keep cows from catching cold when sitting on wet grass." The gentleman of the sparrows probably eats meat, now and then, which comes from the bodies of pigs that enter a slaughterhouse on their own feet, to emerge by trolley, within an incredibly brief interval, at the other end of the building, hung by the heels but minus a good many parts. It may be, too, that he is complaisant concerning the rapidly increasing daily toll of the automobile,² having never connected that

¹ *New Haven Journal-Courier* (Dec. 20, 1916).

² "Year's Auto Deaths up 5.7 %; 17,800 reported killed in nation in first five months." *N. Y. Times* (July 13, Aug. 15, 1931); "Safety Second,"

slaughter with his dogma about the right to life, and its sacredness.

Briefly, A's right to life exists because, if he is killed, some power will avenge him. That power is the might of the society of which he is a member, projected in the form of public opinion. Violence has always been tabooed within the peace-group, as a condition of its existence. An eye has been exacted for an eye and a tooth for a tooth; blood for blood; a life for a life. To kill a member of the out-group was praiseworthy, provided it did not incite that group to war, and sometimes even if it did. Blood-feuds lasted on and on. A stolen woman had no rights at all, because she had no avengers in the persons of her kinsmen; she, as compared with a wife whose kin were at hand, could be knocked on the head with impunity. Then, when the peace-group was enlarged, the right to life was extended. With the development of trade and other inter-group relations, a man might be resident among aliens and yet have a right to life as a member of a nation which would not tolerate attack on its citizens, wherever they might be. Wars have been started by the murder of consuls and missionaries, and heavy indemnities exacted at the point of the bayonet. After a demonstration of this sort, foreigners have enjoyed a full right to life, for a time, at least, until the guarantee of that right was forgotten. Gradually the presumption has developed that everyone has a right to life in a civilized country, but there are still areas, to which guns have not reached, where the stranger takes his life into his own hands — that is, undertakes his own guarantees and tries to live where he has no right to life at all. Only if he is imaginative, may he be reassured by the reflection that, after all, he has a "natural right" to life, is therefore immune from arrows or poison, and probably immortal.

The beginnings of all rights or claims lay in force, or in the fear of its exercise. Those who could take and hold had the claim and the rest perforce submitted. Of their own volition competitors failed to hold off from

in *N. Y. Times* (May 31, 1931). "With an annual toll of 30,000 dead and 750,000 wounded, the automobile makes the battles of Waterloo and Gettysburg pale into insignificance." "Twenty per cent of the drivers cause eighty per cent of the accidents." Holcombe, H. G., letter in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXLVIII, 36 (correspondence).

the appropriation of satisfactions; fear of some kind was the disciplinary factor, here as elsewhere. Discontented classes have always muttered threats of class-war and bloodshed. "Workingmen all over the world will fight unless something is done promptly to relieve the present intolerable situation."¹ Rights have always been guaranteed and supported by appeals to that of which people were afraid: physical force, the power of authorities, of public opinion, of the ghosts and spirits that sanctioned the mores. Classes have always struggled to get one or more of these forms of selective power on their side, to enforce their rights against others.² Until they secured one of them they had no rights at all; where slaves, for example, had none of these supports, they were without rights.

Of these forms of power one has been singled out in history as the most obvious means of securing rights and the most evident sanction of them, namely, political power. Talk about woman's rights, or the rights of the laboring classes, is mostly political talk; organizations to secure such rights are mainly political in nature, or soon become so. The privilege of exercising selection by making laws is the objective. There is a widespread conviction that laws once written on the statute books somehow acquire a power to alter the conditions of life and quell competitors as desired; and this in the face of archives teeming with legislation that was dead letter from the start or was promptly repealed

¹ J. H. Maurer, President of the Pennsylvania Federation of Labor, to members of the Federal Commission on Industrial Relations. *N. Y. Times* (June 28, 1914).

² Much on the class-struggle in Gumpłowicz, L., *Der Rassenkampf; Grundriss der Soziologie*.

because of adverse effects. And yet the fact remains that the "governing class," if there is such, can exercise a certain selection in the mores.

A class is really definable only upon the basis of its mores; the code is the class. The notion that men are born into certain social relations is a kind of survival of the old superstition that they were born into fixed relations with some god. Terms like "bourgeoisie," "proletariat," "noblesse," denote a standard of behavior, a set of ideals, in short, a standard of living, which is in the mores. Its code is the only universally distinctive thing about a class. If a class gets political power, it can to some degree conserve and favor its own mores while suppressing others; and, since it is the powerful who are imitated, can very likely transmit its code to a wider social clientage.¹ The class, on the other hand, which has no political rights, has less chance to do this. There is, in the class-conflict for political power, a selection in the mores through their exhibitors. Probably the importance of this variety of selection is easily exaggerated, because it is an obvious form. It exists among primitive peoples in rather pronounced degree; for instance, in cases where secret societies or castes dominate tribal life. It is a debatable question as to whether the imitation of the powerful is very thoroughgoing. This matter involves certain principles which will be met under the topic of transmission of the mores. But certainly all rights are not legal rights secured by control over legislation, nor does legislation alone confer rights.

With our present limited power of penetration into

¹ Pp. 309 ff. below.

the operation of societal forces there seems to be, in this mode of societal selection, a lack of that precision, exactitude, and finality characteristic of a nature-process. If certain classes are prosperous, powerful, and influential upon the life of society, those discriminated against in the outcome are not thereby eliminated from all influence, let alone from life. Even slaves have modified language. In Darwin's "sexual selection," the weaker male is not always destroyed but simply to some degree excluded from passing on his qualities; and this sort of selection is regarded by Darwin as much less rigorous than natural selection. If that is so, then societal selection of the order before us is still less effective; for the unsuccessful class is to a still less degree than the excluded male prevented from transmitting its qualities and mores.

What is true of classes in the broader sense is true in their degree of lesser societal groupings — for example, sects and parties — which are formed with the idea, sometimes almost unconsciously held, of emphasizing and propagating certain aspects of the mores. They all strive for a position in the societal organization which shall enable them to pursue or enforce their particular prosperity-policies or pet social schemes, which may gain recognition and vogue or may be selected out almost before they have taken form. The fact of selection in all such cases seems patent enough; it is evident that the struggle of classes, issuing as it does in the exaltation of this or that group to an influential position, results in a preferential position for one type of mores over another.

However, the seat of the mores being in the masses,

by merely considering the influence of this or that ascendant class we have not as yet sounded the depths of societal selection. We shall not do so until we have concentrated upon the masses; and, as we do that, we move steadily into the range of the impersonal. There is here an underlying, slow-working automatic selection which, when better understood, will be seen to operate with no less precision and finality than its prototype in the organic range. Mankind are but at the beginning of the scientific study of human society and the way for a long distance ahead is beset with all manner of difficulties from which natural science is immune.

CHAPTER V

SELECTION: NATURE OF THE PROCESS

THE elimination or persistence of the mores is determined by the action of men in masses; through conflict between societies or between the groups, or classes, within a society. Societies or classes fall into conflict in the effort to realize their interests as they see them. One of the large assumptions in the case is that they use "reason" in identifying and pursuing their interests; that there is even a "mass mind" which functions logically and successfully. We are given to understand, on national holidays and other occasions proper to self-complacency, not only that the sovereign people carries its destiny in its own hands, which is true enough, but also that it visualizes that destiny and reasons out wise ways to its realization, this amounting to "rational selection" accomplished by masses of men thinking in terms of society.

Here is a large order. Probably no reader of these pages, perhaps not even the inspired spellbinder himself, in his calmer moments, is ready to subscribe to it. However, whether such a pronouncement is no more than an extreme, employed in the exhilaration of the occasion, or merely a metaphorical splash of color, agreeable and flattering to the people, there is a strong tendency to assume that rationality somehow enters

into the rejection or acceptance of measures proposed for living in society. It does, but not so simply and obviously. The matter calls for examination.

IS SELECTION "RATIONAL"?

That men use their minds upon their interests is evident enough; the flimsiest variations in the mores are ideas from some brain or other. The consensus by which variations attain the stature of folkways and mores is created when numbers think their interests are, or are likely to be, served by the variation presented. Thought occurs all along the line and in every direction, by individuals and not by any "group mind"; it becomes effective in selection only with consensus. Whether it will stay effective depends upon what sort of thought or reasoning it chances to be.

The test of the quality of mental action is by automatic selection. This does not take into account anything whatsoever except what is *done*. The purpose of the originator, or of those who concur with him, does not count in the least. They may have thought logically and produced something that the automatically working forces will not tolerate, or they may have thought erratically and chanced to hit upon a result that had survival-value for the society. In the former case, after an interval of suffering, they had another think. Their thinking was thus corrected by experience.

Whether thinking amounts to anything, in the long run, is a question of what kind of thinking it is. Men use their minds in all cases; but *how* do they use them in the premises? Do they get at the marrow of the

issue? Of any kind of issue, or of none, or of some kinds and not of others?

All men have been trying to set their minds between themselves and the undeviating and pitiless natural, automatic forces in the world. When they know what these forces are and how they work, they can save themselves a great deal of suffering by adjustment to them. The trouble has been that men have inveterately imagined, not investigated, the nature of them, and then have tried to adjust themselves to their imaginings and not to realities. They have figured that to which adjustment must take place as what they wished it to be, or what, "logically," it "must" be, not as what it was and is. The wish has been, again, father to the thought. It still is. Men are still adjusting to their imaginings, as they always have done, except where definite experience, individual and concordant, has brought pressure on them to adjust to realities.

There is only one way to adjust to reality. I am not using philosophical terms in speaking of "reality"; I might express it this way: There is only one way which the race has found practical in living and that way has been to adjust to facts, proved so to be in the light of verified knowledge. Because there has always been a substratum of this sort of adjustment, which, though drab and "materialistic," has worked, the race has been able to get along despite men's flights into "pure reason," unchecked "thinking," and the fabrication of grand principles under no sense of responsibility or even curiosity as to whether or not they could be verified. To be sure, verification was claimed — it came, indeed, in advance, out of revelation, logical

"necessity," and so on. If a fantastic practice failed of subsequent verification in the fact, so much the worse for the facts; or, if its failure was flagrant enough, the original revelation or logic could readily be twisted to its own justification.

It is evident that the mind can be used in various ways and that all of them have been called "reasoning," or "rational." Any form of reasoning that ignores verification on the facts, either because there are no facts to verify by or because the reasoner is too lofty or lazy to perform the drudgery of fact-collection, classification, and analysis, has been called "thobbery."¹ The term is not opprobrious, at least not in all cases — not at all for those who are led to ply their minds poetically upon matters concerning which there is no possibility of verification, provided they are aware of this fact and ready at any time, whatever their *belief*, to say: I do not *know*.

It is desirable, in what follows, to use the word "rational." There is no word discoverable that means exactly what is desired, and it is a sour task to try to coin one for the purpose. It is necessary to attach a single meaning to "rational," which may otherwise be taken justifiably to refer to any one of the above-mentioned mental modes.

"Rational," meaning "in the light of the knowledge — verifiable knowledge — of the time," is not quite what is needed. If a savage is asked why he does thus and so, and replies: "Because our ancestors did it," that is the best that can be expected of him, under the circumstances; it is a reason, though we cannot consider it a good one. He is acting on premises concerning which he has no manner

¹ Ward, H., *Builders of Delusion*, ch. XI.

of doubt; nor should we, under his circumstances. If he heats a lame shoulder, on the theory that he will drive out a torturing spirit in that way, he is rational, according to his lights.

It is this variable of "light" that needs to be reduced, for present purposes, to a constant. Neither of the two cases in the last paragraph is "enlightened." From our point of view, the answer of the first savage is futile, the theory of the second wrong. If we call both "irrational," we mean "not rational in the light of our knowledge," "not capable of sustaining verification." That both are wholly excusable and that the latter method turns out just as well as if the theory of it were sound, are irrelevant. It is the theory, not the result, that we are now interested in — the purpose, not the consequence. The two are brought into harmony only by knowledge.

For our purpose, we can do nothing else than assess rationality upon the basis of the best knowledge available, now, and to us. Our knowledge is not imagined to be an absolute or final criterion; it is an imperfect thing, and our successors will surely consider us to have been painfully benighted. But it is the best criterion there is. Nor is it contended that we ourselves act in the light of what knowledge is available to us. Even in the matter of our most personal interests we do not always act rationally, in that sense; much less do we act, or even think, in terms of the society in which we live, and its corporate interests. If, as to some issue, our knowledge is a zero-quantity, so that we know nothing, then rational action is, even for us, out of the question; we can only try this and that — except, always, that we have the tested methods of science to save our experimentation from being as random as it is among more primitive people.

Hereafter, then, "rational" is to mean: "correctly conceived, in accord with the verified knowledge now available." This allows of certain distinctions that will be useful; for instance, the valve on the Eskimo skin-float is rational, while his preservation of a dog's ham-bone, to bring luck in hunting, is irrational.

"RATIONALITY AFTER THE ACT"

To be called rational, in the sense here chosen, a project must not only work, but work on the theory of its originator, as foreseen and planned, somewhat as a successful mechanical invention works. This excludes what has been called "rationality after the act," which means merely that the errorless action of automatic forces has been noticed. What happens is that such and such variations are launched, being thus presented as candidates for selection before the impersonal forces; certain of them work and are seen to work; men assume that this is because the idea behind them was correct; science comes along and finds out *why* they work; it is for a reason that the originator could not have known; but it is then too late to change the theory, which remains irrational. When people act *as if* they knew what they were about and were intelligently planful (when we know they cannot be), as indicated by expedient results, it is a sign of the presence in the field of powerful, impersonal, automatically acting forces.

Things in nature work. Organic structures are so neatly adjusted that, in the impossibility of ascribing reason to plants and animals, a great reasoning Intelligence has been assumed behind them. Adjustments in nature, having passed the test of selection, are always rational after the act. The expedient thing is preserved, and expediency is supposed to be the product of reason. Very likely it is out of nature that we got our whole conception of rationality, in the first place; having adjusted our way of thinking in necessary, though perhaps unconscious, subordination to the forces about us, we then turn our nature-trained minds upon nature and discover that she is what she is; we then pompously label her rational. Always we act on the theory that whatever is, in nature, is expedient,

and science presently demonstrates the why of its expediency. We have seen this matter of the reasonableness of nature verified, over and over again, and our depth of confidence in it is shown by our practice of living by it. Of so many things in nature that work, it can be shown how they work, that the general principle of reason and "logic" in nature is assumed. But nature's rationality after the act does not satisfy our selected meaning of "rational."

The attempt to force rationality into the irrational is called "rationalization."¹ This is where customs, irrational in origin, having turned out to be rational in the light of subsequently gained knowledge (that is, rational after the act), are interpreted as rational in origin. They are rational to hind-sight, not to fore-sight. Rationalization is an anachronistic introduction of our own reasons where they do not belong; it witnesses to a lack of "historic sense," a defect which leads to reading into the mind of others what is in the mind of the observer. Our savage rubbed and squeezed and even bit a sore muscle to expel the evil spirit of pain; if he is assumed to have had in mind the manipulation of the arteries, so as to invite the poison-removing blood-stream, that would be a flagrant case of rationalization. If we assume, without investigation, that he puts on mourning for the same reason we do, to secure privacy, and not as a disguise, we are guilty of a common rationalization. Rationality demands enlightened planfulness. Circumcision began as a religious rite; later it was found to be hygienic in many cases, so that it is performed upon many male babies born to non-Jewish parents; and presently Moses is presented to us as "the author of a health

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Rationalization."

code.”¹ The mores of all civilized peoples have demanded an increasing security of life and property, and in the conflict of interests there has been no limit to the infliction of pain and death which the exponents of the prevailing code have been willing to put those of the aberrant type, to secure its elimination. Good reasons, acceptable in the light of experience and knowledge, could now be given for such action; when it occurred, however, the reason went no farther back than the commands of a deity.

The following quotation² presents a peculiar illustration of rationality after the act. “Smaller rodents, especially the long-tail nocturnal squirrel, are excluded from the Seri menu by a rigidly observed tabu of undiscovered meaning. A general consequence of this tabu is readily observed on entering Seriland; there is a notable rarity of the serpents, the high-colored and swift efts, and the logy lizards . . . so abundant in neighboring deserts, as well as of song birds and their nests; and this dearth is coupled with a still more notable abundance of the rodents, which have increased and multiplied throughout Seriland so abundantly that their burrows honeycomb hundreds of square miles of territory. A special consequence of the tabu is found in the fact that the myriad squirrel tunnels have rendered much of the territory impassable for horses and nearly so for pedestrians, and have thereby served to repel invaders and enable the jealous tribesmen to protect their principality against the hated alien. Seriland and the Seri are remarkable for illustrations of the interdependence between a primitive folk and their environment; but none of the relations are more striking than that exemplified by the timid nocturnal rodent, which, protected by a faith, has not only risen to the leading place in the local fauna, but has rewarded its protectors by protecting their territory for centuries.”

Among certain Western Indians there is an adjustment of house-

¹ “Moses, the Author of a Health Code,” in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 6, 1910).

² McGee, W J, “The Seri Indians,” in *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, XVII, pt. 1, p. 203.

structure to sex-proportion that was never intended, though it is rational in retrospect. "The clan is a great artificial family, and when it comprises many girls it must necessarily grow. Such is also the case with the individual family, for as the men who are adopted into it by marriage take up their quarters in the family home and children are born to them more space is required. But additional rooms, which are still the family property, must be built in the family quarter, and by a long-established rule they must be built adjoining and connected with those already occupied. Therefore in each village there are constant changes in the plan; new rooms are added here, old rooms abandoned there." ¹

By contrast, the following case exhibits rationality (though it looks irrational at first sight), not after the act, but based upon immediate experience and at the time. The Mawken of the East Indies "do not keep their boats clean. Their staple food is rice and fish. Much of their cooking is done as they move about, and instead of throwing the entrails of the fish into the sea, they clean them into the boat itself. The washings from their cooking vessels are disposed of in the same way. The result is that the bilge of the boat is awash with evil-smelling slush. This is in the tropic! But there is a reason, for if the refuse were cast overboard the ship would surely be followed by sharks, which abound in those waters, and the little children like to dabble a hand or foot in the sea, while the older boys often plunge overboard for a cooling swim. The Mawken may be 'savages,' but they are not lacking in common sense." ²

It is asserted that the mores betray a strain toward the adaptation of means to ends³; and there are undoubtedly cases where, generally on a small scale, means and ends seem to be visualized, so that selection takes place on rational grounds, and even in reaction against the accepted code. In this country, for example, while there are certain things that must not be done,

¹ Mindeleff, C., "Localization of Tusayan Clans," in *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, XIX, II, 647.

² White, "Sea Gypsies of Malaya," rev. in *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 10, 1922).

³ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 5.

owing to the mores, things which public opinion will not yet tolerate, however rational they are — cremation, for instance — there are important movements which public opinion can be brought to support, such as pure-food laws. Such cases exist, and we shall return to them as illustrating the entrance of the rational element. Even in the most modern of cases, however, it is difficult to be precise as to the entrance of this factor of rationality, for it is intertwined with the traditional and irrational, often beyond all disentangling. Who, for example, can analyze the attitude of the South — or, for that matter, of the North — toward the negro, so as to say just what in it is rational and what irrational? That which is called rational is often no more than a camouflage under the cover and protection of which the ancient “instinct” or “second nature” gets its way — on the principle that the chief use of the human mind is to find reasons, before or after the act, for doing what its possessor wants to do. The societal selection which takes place in the modern age and of course includes rational selection if that occurs anywhere, is to the last degree complex; it lacks the clearness and precision of natural selection and even of societal selection in its ruder forms. Some say the process is all hit-or-miss; in fact, that there is so little regularity about it that to try to extend over the life of modern society such a process as rational selection is a vain and forlorn hope.

No one can be very sanguine about it. The project rests wholly upon the possibility of developing a science of society after the manner of the natural sciences, which have so compellingly demonstrated their utility.¹

¹ Keller, A. G., “Prerequisites to Prophecy,” in *Yale Review*, XX, 532 ff.

Science, as "trained and organized common sense," is the most perfect instrument of adjustment which men have ever won, and affords a basis for prediction, a thing very different from divination. Though the sum of human knowledge is exceedingly small, still, what there is of it has been very effective. Where science has been checked in its course, power in the conflict of life has not increased. Compare the present status of China with that of the Western nations, and then her status of centuries ago, when she led the world in knowledge, with that of the ancient Germans and Gauls. Compare the Japan of 1910 with the Japan of 1810. By science, one might even get outside the mores of his time and local group, to attain a vantage-ground from which to pass rational judgment on his own code. It is admitted that a real science of society is a pious hope rather than a confidently expected development; and that in its absence, the human mind, with all its feebleness and thobbery, is sure constantly to be importing wrong valuations resting upon slight knowledge and upon bias of numerous kinds.

THE IRRATIONALITY OF THE MORES

It is indispensable, in order to represent things as they are, to throw into some prominence the essentially irrational and traditional character of the mores and their alteration. For one who observes the life of society without excessive bias, a set of representative illustrations, presently to come, which can be amplified by scanning *Folkways* or *The Science of Society* ought to carry the point. The most emancipated of men cannot free themselves from the domination of the

mores. And it is well that they cannot, for, as Sumner¹ says, "if we had to form judgments as to all . . . cases before we could act in them, and were forced always to act rationally, the burden would be unendurable. Beneficent use and wont save us this trouble." Even as individuals, we have difficulty in viewing our minute affairs with rationality. It has been noted that most of us, even in our private careers, live for the most part in the mores, acting unconsciously after their prescriptions; and that all of us live to a very large degree in them; that is, that we are all creatures of use and wont.

Few of us have a positive, well-thought-out plan of life, whether it be right or wrong. We marvel at the self-directed course of a Goethe, and assign it forthwith to genius. We meet emergencies one or two at a time, acting in them for the most part without much perspective beyond the case in hand. There are too many exigencies for us to give much thought to each, and so we go on by rule of thumb, that is, in the mores. So long as we slide over vicissitudes, or slip past, that satisfies us. If our mores effect for us a comparatively painless passage through life, we have no idea of criticizing or altering them; we let well enough alone. Every man, no matter how enlightened, has his point where it does not seem worth while to calculate any further, and he "takes his chance." A Newton could concentrate "a little longer" than the rest of his fellows; the savage leaves off somewhat earlier in the process, just as the child does; but we are all only human beings, with minds that tire and attention that flags. Then we fall back unconsciously on the ways that have

¹ *Folkways*, § 68.

come out of the experience of the race. Consequently, while the advance of knowledge has already exercised selective power over the folkways, and will probably wield an ever increasing influence upon them, yet the bulk of selection must still be of an automatic and irrational order.

What is true of the individual is even more marked of the group. Seldom, if ever, does a society deliberately set out to apply rational criticism to its mores. Our sex-taboo is largely irrational, inherited as it is through religion from dogmatic propositions laid down by lawgivers who have no authority for us. A Hindu lends his wife to get good offspring. This may be rational on the face of it, but it is also shocking, being against our mores, and most of us would not even tolerate the mention of its rationality. There is probably a good reason for our repugnance, but we do not stop to hunt it out. It seems sensible in every way that a widower should marry his deceased wife's sister, especially if he has young children. Such a second wife would naturally be least likely to turn out a "viper to the first brood"; and there is, of course, no more question of incest than there was in the first marriage. But the vicissitudes of the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill in England show how difficult it was to make sense heard, even in so clear a case and where the mores were wide open to criticism. This is another instance of how the mores can make anything right and true and exempt it from criticism.

The touchstone for the mores was and is the sensation of pleasure and pain, the degree of satisfaction experienced. Action was all empirical and without

perspective beyond the case in hand and is mainly so still. It is present personal or classwise dissatisfaction rather than the anticipation of a better satisfaction — a negative rather than a positive incitement — that leads to change, involving selection, in the mores. And the dissatisfaction or need must be felt strongly by many if it is to provide an incentive capable of overcoming all the inertia and superstition that block the way to alteration in the code.

SELECTION IS UNDESIGNED, AUTOMATIC

This dissatisfaction led, at the outset, to “blundering efforts” to satisfy the need; but the case is not so much different, upon higher stages of culture, when old and settled folkways become misfits and produce discomfort. The efforts of the “masses” to escape from their dissatisfactions have always been clumsy and often aimless. Sometimes they do not even realize that they are unfortunate and miserable — especially if they are isolated from the rest of the world, as the Russian peasants were, and so have no standard of comparison — and when they are roused by their pain, they plunge about with no settled plan and no rational aim. A skillful demagogue can lead them in almost any direction, by playing upon their inflamed feelings and then holding out hopes which are seldom examined on the basis of even unadorned common sense. If the dissatisfaction, original and fostered, is keen enough, there come about, often with bloodshed, a revolution and a new type of mores which, whether it yields satisfaction or not, amounts to an alteration of the incidence of discontent, so that, at length, the new

order, by contrast with the unsettled period of revolution, seems in some degree satisfactory. The harness ceases to gall the old spots; it is probably starting new sores, but its attrition is not yet felt. In any case, there is change and hope, and the monotony is relieved. There is selection of some sort in the mores.

VARIOUS ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE AUTOMATIC PROCESS

The whole case of evolution in the mores could be portrayed in connection with language, which is an adjustment to life-conditions comparable to a tool. One man has an idea in his head and wants to get it into someone else's head. So he begins to make motions with his hands — gesture language — and eventually with the muscles of his tongue and adjacent parts. Waves of air are generated which impinge upon membranes in the head of his hearer, and presently the idea has been transmitted. This is a marvel. But nobody invented it. Nobody made language, and everybody made it. As conceptions increased, words sprang up to convey them, until exactitude of meaning was attained — so that synonyms appeared, to carry fine shades of signification. It is striking that such delicate distinctions occur in some connections and not in others, so that, for example, the terms “faith,” “knowledge” — yes, the tortured “rational” — must exasperatingly cover different conceptions the distinction between which is, to some of us, of the utmost significance.¹ Of course, discriminating terms are absent because in the past no need of discrimination has

¹ Ward, H., *Builders of Delusion*, chs. VI-VIII.

been felt. Where the idea is lacking, the word does not come to be.

Structural development of speech ensued, so that rules of grammar can be derived from the study of ways of expression over the formation of which no rational inventiveness presided. As in nature, spontaneous regularity is present. No deliberately devised tongue ever attained much success; and even the modern artificial language is nothing but an eclectic combination modeled upon what already exists. Such a selection might well be termed rational; but it has always lacked the pragmatic quality of languages that have been automatically developed.

The great wonder, when one comes to realize it, is that language, built up unpremeditatedly by millions of unthinking and casual users, shows a regularity and orderliness of tense, mood, voice, case, and so on, comparable to that regularity of the solar system which has required all the ingenuity of science to follow, as science, slowly and laboriously limping after fact, has encountered an astounding law and order at every stage.

The development of language shows a startling likeness to that of organic structures. To see in this parallelism a mere analogy is witless.

"The formation of different languages and of distinct species, and the proofs that both have been developed through a gradual process, are curiously parallel. But we can trace the formation of many words further back than that of species, for we can perceive how they actually arose from the imitation of various sounds. We find in distinct languages striking homologies due to community of descent, and analogies due to a similar process of formation. . . . The frequent presence of rudiments, both in languages and in species, is still more remarkable. . . . In the spelling also of words, let-

ters often remain as the rudiments of ancient forms of pronunciation. Languages, like organic beings, can be classed in groups under groups; and they can be classed either naturally according to descent, or artificially by other characters. Dominant languages and dialects spread widely, and lead to the gradual extinction of other tongues. . . . We see variability in every tongue, and new words are continually cropping up; but as there is a limit to the powers of the memory, single words, like whole languages, gradually become extinct. As Max Müller has well remarked: 'A struggle for life is constantly going on among the words and grammatical forms in each language. The better, the shorter, the easier forms are constantly gaining the upper hand, and they owe their success to their own inherent virtue.'"¹

This case of language, as one of spontaneous variation, transmission, and selection, might be indefinitely developed. It is an exceptionally clear type of what occurs in all the rest of the mores. "Adhering tenaciously to all his elders taught him, the primitive man deviates into novelty only through unintended modifications. Everyone now knows that languages are not devised but evolved."² What is "right" in style of speaking or writing is all a question of "good usage." Split infinitives, hanging participles, lack of precision between futurity and volition, are not utterly damned by the oracles of certain glib "authorities" on style; they can even be found in the conversation and writings of classic authors. Manuals of rhetoric that set up stylistic "principles" belong with other ambitious attempts to codify the mores and pass easy, "logical" judgment upon them.

¹ Darwin, C., *Descent of Man*, p. 102; Whitney, W. D., *Life and Growth of Language*; Jespersen, O., *Language, Its Nature, Development, and Origin* (N. Y., 1922); Mencken, H. L., *The American Language* (N. Y., 1921).

² Spencer, H., *Principles of Sociology*, II, § 399.

It is possible that, on the whole, there was a net gain in dropping the dual number, the middle voice, and several tenses, as represented in the Greek; if so, it was won unconsciously, not rationally, and over a long period. Probably it would be sensible to eliminate the case-endings and the gender of nouns and adjectives in some modern languages, but no one gets very far in campaigning for the general acceptance of such rational simplification. If Kemal Pasha succeeds in his astonishingly bold attempt to alter the Turkish script, it will be because of the manifest persuasion of the Turks that economic benefits will ensue upon the change. There has been some agitation in Germany to get rid of Gothic type and in Russia for the relief of the alphabet from some of its redundancies, and this will probably succeed after a time, for, printed letters being more tangible things, less complicated and eye-tiring characters can speak for themselves.

It is noteworthy that changes of this sort may take place not because native Germans or Russians have become dissatisfied, but because foreigners have entered the culture-area who become impatient of what they regard as a clumsy and difficult medium. An eminent Egyptologist, the late Dr. Spiegelmeyer, once asked the writer whether he found the Gothic type trying to his eyes. On receiving an affirmative response, the German replied that it was not so with him; that he read the Gothic type with more ease than the Roman. He added that this was natural enough, for one got into the habit of taking in phrases rather than single words, and you could do that best where you had long been familiar with the general look of the printed page. He said that this perhaps explained why his own experience went counter to what he understood to be the results of tests devised by oculists. In any case, criticism comes chiefly from non-Germans, who thus take part in a selection which has become a feature of a culture-area rather than of a nation.

Numerical systems too have been under selection: if anyone were to try to multiply MDXVIII by CXLIX, instead of 1518 by 149, he could readily gather why, over the centuries, the Arabic system has prevailed. In taking on the Arabic numerals, it was the practical trader who led the scholars,¹ just as it was the matter-of-fact and hurried Mediterranean merchant who stripped time-taking ideographs down to a swiftly written alphabet, and the later man of business who speedily dropped long-hand for short-hand. That it is a slow and discouraging process to replace, among the masses, one system by another, is proved by the ill success of the metric system and the opposition to a simplified calendar.

Another important instance of the automatic selection appears in war. All great wars are readily seen, in the verdict of history (whose conclusiveness does not derive merely from the fact, as the cynic argues, that everyone is dead who might contradict), to have been selective. The persons who assert that war accomplishes nothing are those who are still too near the contest and are victims to pain, disappointment of unreasonable expectations, and disillusionment. Alexander carried Western mores eastward, and might have reversed the process had he lived longer. The West-East movement has continued ever since, leading to the Discoveries and resulting in the elimination of whole sets of mores. Rome having conquered and reduced Carthage, what Carthage had stood for was largely swept away; ensuing culture bore the Roman, not the Semitic stamp. The American Civil War

¹ Smith and Karpinski, *Hindu-Arabic Numerals*, p. 136.

resulted in the abolition of slavery, the National Banking System, an elevated protective tariff, pension frauds — all unpremeditated except, perhaps, for the first. The Spanish-American struggle broke our mores of isolation, though they were going in any case — and it was by no choice of ours, as indicated by recent frantic efforts to shore them up — through the development of transportation and communication and the consequent “annihilation of distance.” Complaint that war, or force, has done nothing really means that war does not do what is planned, that it is automatic in its action; and with that way of stating it few would disagree.

With the usual tendency to seek for agency rather than cause, the World War has been referred to the machinations, errors, delays, and moronism of particular individuals.¹ It was probably planned and prepared for by men in authority, though their plans did not get the results envisaged; but it was neither intended nor wanted by the masses, and no nation was hardy enough to stand forth and boast: “We planned it, and we are proud of our work.” Rather have they all, with an eye to the public opinion of the world, and with one accord, sought to divert the charge of “war-guilt” upon one another, well knowing that the sentiment of the world is against war. The fact is that deep-lying impersonal causes brought to pass a national rivalry which, carried on for a long time along economic and other peaceful lines, eventually issued into violence. Those who worked for this issue are the war-guilty. Any great war becomes presently a “people’s war,” for

¹ Keller, *Through War to Peace*, ch. II.

elements sometimes wholly irrelevant to the issue, such as emotional propaganda, enter to persuade the masses that their interests and even their lives are in peril. This is a long story, of many complications and ramifications, but in it the rational element is not present in any human-society-regarding phase.

The selection ensuing upon the World War has been largely as unpremeditated as our own acquisition of the Philippines, in 1898 — those “Pearls of the Tropic Seas,” of which many have become heartily tired. Germany did not go to war to get British women the vote they were clamoring for, and yet that was one of the important results of the war; nor to modify conceptions of legitimacy, as in the case of the “war-babies” that came with invasion or with concentration of soldiers in home-camps; nor to ventilate the question of the expediency of polygamy, in the presence of a heightened disproportion of the sexes. None of the Allies, in 1914, set out with the object of toppling the Tzar or the Kaiser, or with the idea of blessing the American ammunition-maker. All such results were extras not on the program.

Take our own case. For a time we became militaristic, a quality that sticks for a while, and intensely thrifty — one that does not. We forgot our fears of monarchy and concentrated power in the Executive. We sacrificed personal liberty on all sides, even accepting conscription with docility and allowing, later on, an indefinite extension to war-time prohibition. We gave up amusements for work and planted ineffectual potato-patches upon shaded lawns. We came to have our doubts about the efficiency of the “melting-pot” and

became less hospitable to aliens. Later, of course, we reacted against most of this and swung to lawlessness, wastefulness, extravagance, and other exaggerations.

Out of it all, nevertheless, came a repudiation of much that certain of the antagonists stood for; and proposed definitions and extensions of the international code are even now aiming to consolidate a new set of mores over the civilized world. For one thing, the idea is to eliminate any more such painful experiences, together with their causes, from mankind's experience. If peace-advocates were truly rational, they would have the protective tariff on their list of agenda; for the final plea for such a tax emphasizes self-sufficiency in time of war. However, a net result of the conflict is the tendency to extend the peace-group, represented by such projects as the League of Nations, a rational plan on the part of its proponents that has already demonstrated a considerable degree of expediency, one, however, to the support of which the masses of mankind will be gradually brought only by the experience of its benefits to their personal and local interests.

There are always minor tragedies in the realization of a major selection. It is a case of the clash between the individual and the group-interest. Nothing is all good or all bad, but destiny is doled out from the jars of the gods as a mixture of good and ill.¹ There are penalties of progress, and the elevated status of the rational being has its drawbacks.

"More American lives are likely to be lost in China before the civil war ends. No matter how many white soldiers and sailors dart hither and thither on Chinese rivers and railways, they cannot

¹ Homer, *Iliad*, XXIV, 527 ff.

be everywhere. No matter how hard Chinese commanders try to preserve public order and military discipline, there will be mobs, looting, and hideous cruelties. These things are inseparable from a conflict of this scope and nature, but we beg our readers to remember that the conflict is bigger than any and all of these piecemeal manifestations. The future of one of the world's great, indestructible peoples is being forged on the anvil of history, and the lesser travails of individuals and small groups, sad though they may be, must be borne with philosophic patience as part of the grist resulting from the slow grinding of 'the mills of the gods.'"¹

Out of war there come also many unpremeditated contributions to the arts of peace.² A pair of instances will carry this point: consider the impetus lent by the late conflict to the development and use of the tank-tractor, now applied to keep open roads in the tropics, and the airplane, employed to patrol forests, locate schools of fish, scatter boll-weevil exterminator, and so on, to say nothing of its commercial uses.³ War is a forcing process for many such developments; but no nation has ever gone to war with the deliberate idea of spurring on mechanical processes or stimulating invention.

If the late war did nothing else, it changed the dwelling-place of The All-Highest from Potsdam to Doorn, replacing him with an aged soldier who knows what loyalty to an oath means. This is significant of much to one who has an eye for the broad alterations in the mores which represent new lines of development for nations. The elimination of the Hohenzollerns was not, however, one of the war-aims of the Germans, nor yet the establishment of a republic.

¹ *Independent*, CXVIII, 374 (April 9, 1927).

² Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "War."

³ "The Airplane in Industry," *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 22, 1927).

A mechanical engineer,¹ in a book that might almost be called a treatise on business-mores, says that manufacturing, though indispensable to human welfare, "has been developed . . . and is still operated without much reasoned purpose. Changes and modifications have usually been put into effect to meet particular conditions and circumstances; the cases of long-time preplanning are few indeed.

When modern manufacturing began there were already at hand traditional ways or procedures for doing work and getting work done. They represented a concurrence of belief or willingly accepted arrangements on the part of peoples. They had been proved by experience to be good practice or successful expedients. In short, they were known to be 'best ways.' They, and many others like them which have to do with the maintenance of the race, are called 'folkways' or 'mores.' In these folkways we find the origin of manufacturing fundamentals."

In an elementary *Description of Industry*, by an eminent economist,² there is presented a clear-cut picture of automatic selection by competition — a competition whose evils are regarded as the price paid for its benefits. In the placement of men, the adjustment of production, the application of effort, the handling of comparative costs, and the effort to secure "justice in industry," comprehensive adaptation is a gradual growth out of detail devices to meet rising situations. No one realizes the range of his own special activity as it interlocks with that of others whom he may not even know about. The carpenter may learn, with astonishment, that his activity is connected with and supplementary to that of some Malay who labors to provide the pepper for the carpenter's table. The process of marketing, with its gradual and unplanned adjustments: local and primary markets, middle men, jobbers, commission men, brokers, wholesalers, bankers, transportation men, retailers, and so on, includes no one who could have figured the process

¹ Alford, L. P., *Laws of Management Applied to Manufacturing* (N. Y., 1928); Page, E. D., *Trade Morals, Their Origin, Growth, and Province*.

² Adams, H. C., ch. VII; especially pp. 17 ff., 120.

in advance, or thought it out, and few who can take it all in, in perspective, as it stands. It is "evident that some powerful force that makes for agreement is essential. What is this force that tends to harmonize conflicting interests and keep production going? How does it operate?"

The reflection is suggested that once all this complicated economic development would have been referred to a god (or to some semi-divine culture-hero or law-giver), just as was the camel's adequate foot or the pitcher of the orchid. It is the "natural," rather than the artificial or artful, that is hard to explain and control. Where the artificer is human, a human can manage to follow him; what is really difficult to understand is the natural development of the clover-leaf ¹ or of the human institution, where no human mind could have aspired to construction or control. The economic organization, in its baffling complexity, seems to have been the direct creation of some omniscient intelligence; and so do the regulative organization culminating in the state, the property-system, the religious organization, and that of marriage and the family. It is an easy and a lazy way out to say that man "made" these structures or that a god "gave" them. That takes the question out of science forthwith, and spares all the labor of thought and investigation. The scientific way is to realize the impersonal character of all these developments, organic and social, seek for causes rather than agents, and try to discover laws with the idea of adjusting to them. This is the only reassuring way, for, while a god might not choose to help us up again, when we have sustained another

¹ Ward, H., *Evolution for John Doe*, pp. 69-76; *Exploring Nature*.

“fall of man,” if we set our course according to the immutable laws of nature we are not threatened by even the shadow of change.

A selection of trivial instances will further illustrate the unexpected element in society's life that lends it its automatic character. “One of the latest accusations against the automobile comes from the shoe-trade. . . . The man or woman who did not have ‘work’ shoes and also ‘Sunday’ shoes was scarce. Now the farmer finds that one pair at a time does him quite well.” Farmers walk less, especially alongside their horses, when big loads are hauled; they use cars and trucks. Parallel to this is the plaint of the manufacturer of baby-buggies against birth-control. Chinese manufacturers will, it is predicted, suffer greatly from the cutting off of the national queue. It is the evolution of the newspaper which has hurried that of the printing-press. Again, a Nebraska court has refused an injunction and \$10,000 damages to a farmer who “complained that the noise of the airplane motors frightened his chickens, disturbed his rest, produced nervousness and was detrimental to his general health.” The radio involves legal questions as to ownership of the air, or ether, in addition to those raised by the flying-machine; and it also, as can readily be foreseen, exerts an urge toward the development of a common language — which, in turn, if it ever exists, cannot but smooth over one vital obstacle to the extension of the international peace-group.¹

Passing such random illustrations, let us consider the matter of law. It seems often, and not alone to the layman, to be highly irrational.

“The *Hartford Courant* is not more mystified than others, who analyze human actions, at the course society often takes to protect itself. A man living at the western end of the state killed two people the other day, and made his escape, but not until he had been badly beaten up by one of his victims. When he was caught he was in a wretched physical condition. The state is now trying to restore

¹ *N. Y. Times* (July 15, 1926; Aug. 1 and 12, 1926; Feb. 5, 1911; June 13, 1930; March 3, 1926).

him to a fit physical condition at public cost. If it succeeds and he is found guilty of murder in the second degree, he will be sent to prison and cared for more comfortably than ever before at public expense. If he is found guilty, but declared insane, he will be kept in comfort the rest of his days at public expense. If he is found guilty of murder in the first degree, he will be killed by the state after the state has restored him to health, all at the public expense. The *Courant* says: 'Humanity demands the one action and justice the other, but it certainly looks as if they were working at cross purposes.' Life is just one queer thing after another."¹

"The best way to advance a paradox is to look as though you were uttering a platitude. In this art the wittiest writer cuts a poor figure besides the laws of society."²

The fact is that law may be no more nor less irrational than the custom, or "unwritten law," out of which it grew. Selection among legal enactments, determining whether they shall have force or become dead letter, is always performed by public opinion, supporting the mores. Lynching, without any process of law at all, has been countenanced by the community in which it has occurred.

"In last week's sensational murder trial in England, both the Public Prosecutor and the presiding Judge warned the jury that they must take no account of 'the unwritten law.' Such a thing should not figure in the British court of justice. But the result showed that it did, just the same. The jury, amid the cheers of the spectators, acquitted the man who had killed his wife's paramour — much the same as if it had all happened in New York.

"A law does not need to be written in order to be effective. Indeed, high legal authority can be cited for the belief that all law begins as custom. If that is so, it is valid in practice even before it is enacted. For convenience and for the sake of public sanction it

¹ *New Haven Journal-Courier* (May 8, 1916).

² Hope, A., *The King's Mirror*, p. 253 (Tauchnitz ed.).

comes to be embodied in a statute, but it existed and was powerful in the community before that.

"When the reverse occurs, and a law is put in the books not in accord with settled custom, we know what the result is. The custom has a way of asserting itself, and the ostensible law is more and more ignored. This the prohibitionists are sorrowfully finding out.

"No doubt, the plea of the unwritten law is open to grave abuses, just as are excuses made in France for the 'crime passionnel.' These appeals are, indeed, rare in English trials, but it is evident that they are often tacitly made. In the case referred to, the majesty of the law was vindicated by finding the accused man guilty of 'possessing a weapon with intent to endanger life.' He did endanger life to the extent of shooting a man dead, but that 'subsequent proceeding' did not trouble the jury."¹

In the revised criminal code of Italy, the "unwritten law" as regards the adultery of a consort, a daughter, or a sister, or the paramour of such, is taken up into enactment, under "homicides for reasons of honor," with a penalty of three to seven years. This goes along with the restoration of the death-penalty.²

Justice Holmes "bids us, steadily, to think things and not words. At the core of his legal opinions is the realization that words are but symbols of things and relations. And so his constitutional opinions are but applications of his candid insight into the realities of law-making and the share the courts have in its process." Like Pareto, he warns against the hypnotic influence of "verbal manifestations." Judge Holmes was one of the first to break away from the prevailing legal philosophy of the last century. He takes no stock in grand principles, "natural law," or other

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 29, 1926).

² *N. Y. Times* (July 1, 1931).

figments, and would never assert, in the style of Moses, that: "This is The Law." He writes¹:

"It cannot be helped, it is as it should be, that the law is behind the times. I told a labor leader once that what they asked was favor, and if the decision was against them they called it wicked. The same might be said of their opponents. It means that the law is growing. As law embodies beliefs that have triumphed in the battle of ideas and then have translated themselves into action, while there still is doubt, while opposite convictions still keep a battlefield against each other, the time for law has not come; the notion destined to prevail is not yet entitled to the field.

"It is a misfortune if a Judge reads his conscious or unconscious sympathy with one side or the other prematurely into the law, and forgets that what seemed to him to be first principles are believed by half his fellow-men to be wrong. I think that we have suffered from this misfortune, in State courts at least, and that this is another and very important truth to be extracted from the popular discontent.

"When twenty years ago [he is speaking in 1913] a vague terror went over the earth and the word socialism began to be heard, I thought and still think that fear was translated into doctrines that have no proper place in the Constitution or the common law. Judges are apt to be naïf, simple-minded men, and they need something of Mephistopheles. We, too, need education in the obvious — to learn to transcend our own convictions and to leave room for much that we hold dear to be done away with, short of revolution, by the orderly change of law."

There is always in evidence the "struggle between a legal theory becoming obsolete . . . and a custom on its way to become law."²

If, as was reported, in 1917, by an official of the Chamber of Commerce of the United States, national and state legislatures passed 62,550 laws (as compared with 1500 passed by the British Parlia-

¹ "The Captain," in *N. Y. Times* (editorial, March 7, 1926); Holmes, "Natural Law," in *Harvard Law Review* (Nov., 1918); Keller, "Law in Evolution," in *Yale Law Journal*, XXVIII, 769 ff.; Pareto, V., *Trattato di Sociologia Generale*, I, §§ 109 ff.; 1543 ff.

² Ashley, W., *Economic History*, II, 281.

ment in ten years),¹ then this mass of mainly hasty and ill-considered variations must have suffered considerable mortality by way of nullification. If people simply and spontaneously ignore a law, that is automatic selection. Repeal may easily be of the same type, when it is due to general dissatisfaction, largely inarticulate. "Every great reform," writes Buckle,² "which has been effected has consisted not in doing something new, but in undoing something old. The most valuable additions made to legislation have been enactments destructive of previous legislation; and the best laws which have been passed have been those by which some former laws have been repealed." Comment upon this passage is as follows: "That is especially applicable to statutes, and is least true of unwritten common law. Statutes seeking to revolutionize common law are hard to enforce or to maintain. When the Sherman law was a revolutionary statute it earned ill-will. Since its interpretation by the rule of reason, deduced from merchant practice, it has grown in strength. It would be futile to repeal it, because it is now expressive of the Federal common law, which would survive even if the statute should be repealed." This "interpretation" is one of the common forms of unnoticed selection, by which a maladjustment is deftly transmuted into an adjustment.

Fashion, as a final illustration of the automatic as distinguished from the rational, may become "sensible," but there is no guarantee that it will stay so. The whole subject seems to be one governed by caprice. Hoop-skirts, sheath-skirts, dragging skirts, constricted waists, pierced ears (or noses), unnatural, languishing postures, female physical frailty (or its counterfeit), and numerous other wholly senseless, even demonstrably unwholesome, fashions are temporarily under the ban. Optimists assert that now, at length, we have become rational. These obsolete modes, like that of Chinese foot-deformation, are ugly as well as

¹ *New Haven Journal-Courier* (Feb. 1, 1917).

² *History of Civilization in England*, quoted in *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 15, 1922).

unhygienic, and now we know it and have discarded them. There is no telling when they will bob up again in our midst. Tight shoes and preposterously high heels are flourishing, with the result of deformed feet and various ailments due to the strain of unnatural posture. Men wear everyday clothing that is too heavy and restricting for health or comfort, and weirdly cut dresscoats that are modeled after the English highwayman's garb. The only reason that is injected into common fashions is what the designers, advertisers, and sellers of the modish articles have put into their business, for personal reasons remote from general social benevolence. Fashions are freaky rather than rational.

And all fashions are not concerned with personal appearance. There are societal types and standards of beauty, propriety, distinction, or style, upon the basis of which operates a societal selection that is one of the mightiest societal influences. Those who conform to the types are favored and honored. They win influence and power. Others are despised, neglected, excluded, more or less completely destroyed. Warriors, athletes, scientific men, millionaires, ecclesiastics, or other types may be the ones which, at a time, in a society, are public favorites. Then others affect the external forms, at least, and manners of the popular type, and young people are trained by their parents, or driven by their own enthusiasms, to choose the career which is most esteemed. Now one type, now another, is favored; and this is well, for otherwise social distortion might ensue. Such selection fixes the character of the society, and meets with little criticism in so doing.

REVOLUTIONS

We now return from lengthy illustration of the automatic nature of selection to the topic of the class-struggle. When this conflict issues in violence, we have a "revolution." Like conquests, revolutions on the grand scale, such as the French Revolution, mark epochs in the course of development of mores and institutions. Out of them come "rights of man" and changes like the fall of feudalism or of "the mediæval system." The American Revolution, followed up by a Monroe Doctrine, amounted to a repudiation of many elements of European mores and the establishment and defense of an isolation in which a new set of ideas and practices could be nurtured. The reader of history will recall that new dispensations have often dated from a revolutionary selection of this order.

We are more interested here in revolutions unaccompanied by war. There was the Industrial Revolution, for instance, which economists never tire of acclaiming as the herald of the modern era, and which is by no means over, after more than a century, for not yet is the world adjusted to the machine and its accompaniments and sequels. The Reformation was a revolution; the Renaissance another. Most of these large-scale selections begin with alterations in the economic life, as will presently appear, although this will not often be admitted, for men, as has been remarked, generally have two reasons for their actions: a good one, and the real one; and the former, as more prepossessing, is usually in the show-window. In general, what large-scale revolutions do is to alter the

incidence of discontent. At any rate, they break monotony. And after them and their confusion, almost anything seems good, particularly the restoration of law and order. Then comes the chance of the Man on the Horse who does not scruple to use "a whiff of grapeshot."

ELECTIONS

Someone has said that every presidential election in the United States is a bloodless revolution; some of them have barely stopped at that point. Military terms flourish in connection with them: campaign, victory, defeat, invasion, marshaling of forces, strategy, tactics, war-chest, shock-troops, first gun, heavy artillery, reënforcements, line-holding, smoke screen, and so on. The election brings before us the struggle of two or more composite sub-groups not conterminous with social classes: political parties. In a general way they grow up about the nucleus of a common interest that is felt rather than demonstrated. Party affiliations are largely in the mores and are traditional. They are the expression of an interest or interests held in common by smaller groups which are willing to unite for their realization. In other respects such uniting groups may have very different codes; "politics makes strange bedfellows." However, political parties, as likely to comprise those who have a number of interests in common, or think they have, may be inclusive of economic classes (for instance, debtors) or even geographical sections.

These diverging interests of parties are settled for varying periods by elections, and the methods of these

reveal the essentially automatic nature of the selection resulting in a new prosperity-policy. In general, the party in power will stay there so long as it can "give the people prosperity," or persuade them that it is doing that — so long as they are contented. The election plea at its weakest is to let well enough alone. There is never any candid reference of prosperity to non-political factors, as, for example, the rich natural resources of the country, its underpopulation, or the like. It is always the pet policy, protection or free-trade, war or peace, that has, singly and alone, and as the result of wise, rational procedure, produced well-being. History and common sense are perverted, deliberately or under bias, to demonstrate this. There is a great deal of "pathos" in the party system, which betrays its fundamental relation to the mores. Pathos, in the original Greek sense of the word, says Sumner,¹ "is the glamour of sentiment which grows up around the pet notion of an age and people, and which protects it from criticism. . . . Whenever pathos is in play the subject is privileged. It is regarded with a kind of affection, and is protected from severe examination. It is made holy or sacred. The thing is cherished with such a preëstablished preference and faith that it is thought wrong to verify it. Pathos, therefore, is unfavorable to truth."

On some such body of sentiment in the mores rests the "solid" strength of a political party. But to hold its dominance it must, like the Indian medicine-man, prevent misfortune. No matter what the source of "hard times," their appearance is ominous for the party

¹ *Folkways*, §§ 178, 179.

in power. It is ineffectual to demonstrate that "we didn't do it," even if that were possible in the face of the accusations of the parties out of power; the retort is: "Why didn't you stop it?" and no query is tolerated as to whether it was in human power to stop it. This condition of things is often jocularly portrayed by referring the cause of floods or droughts or earthquakes to the inefficiency of the ruling party.

Prosperity is what a shrewd critic of affairs¹ calls one of the "dumb" issues. "How a speaker can convince a man that he is prosperous when he is broke or that he is not prosperous when he is doing well, is beyond me. If a voter can't feel in his pocket and see if he is doing well without having some total stranger tell him, then this Government shouldn't be in the hands of the people. We might as well have candidates argue with us that we have a pain in the stomach."

In the campaign of 1916, when the party in power had the tactical advantage of existing prosperity, so-called, it used its chance to the full. "Other and larger political considerations might supersede it, but they could never wholly remove it. Mr. Hughes has met this 'Prosperity issue' in two ways — by arguing that existing conditions are temporary, precarious, and unsound, and by reverting to the lack of prosperity before the war began, but during the Wilson administration." He asserts that present prosperity is "built on sand," because "we are under the unhealthy stimulus of the European war"; and he blames the Wilson administration and the tariff law passed under it for the unpleasant financial situation prior to the war. "The sober historical investigator would dismiss the supposition as absurd."²

"That the ruling party's majority in the House will be reduced at a 'mid-term election' is a political axiom to which, since the Civil War at any rate, there has been no exception." Instances and figures are given. The indication is that there has been a perennial

¹ Will Rogers, in *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 30, 1928).

² "'Prosperity' and the Campaign," in the *Nation*, CIII (N. Y., Oct. 26, 1916).

disappointment, and that the promised prosperity has not materialized. Nevertheless, the argument on that basis is used over and over again, and apparently loses none of its allure by reason of disillusionment. Even now the present administration is suffering because of business depression. "No President, when compelled to face that over a period of time, can hope to preserve his popularity undimmed. People unreasonably complain of him as of a sort of earthly Providence who has failed in his duty to keep everybody well and happy and prosperous." "I have observed," said McKinley, "that majorities rise with prosperity."¹

A state of popular discontent, then, leads politicians to expect an overturn, for the people, in this country at least, having in their mores a profound faith in government activity, think to better their condition by voting out the party in power. Party platforms and election speeches take especially into account the mores of the discontented classes and sections, and, behind solemn expressions of righteous devotion to the nation at large and of pious horror and alarm at the attitude of opponents, the main line of attack is the appeal to personal and local bias and interest. "When America is electioneering she is always handicapped by the necessity of politicians propitiating the baser sorts of particularism."² The tariff, as Cleveland stoutly asserted, is a "local issue." We have Bismarck's word for it that to carry principles into politics is like trying to go through thick woods with a ten-foot pole between the teeth. What is wanted is eloquent speakers who can appeal through the emotions to the mores, and especially who can excite and amuse. Ingersoll and Bryan

¹ "Elections after Depression," in *N. Y. Times* (April 26, 1930; May 7, 1930).

² *Pall Mall Gazette*, quoted in *N. Y. Times* (May 30, 1920).

could hypnotize audiences by their voices and the play of their vivid imaginations.

It is said that the radio threatens to eliminate the arts of the spellbinder: "the orator with his personality, his knack of speech, his skill in handling a great audience, has no advantage over the simple, straightforward speaker with a good radio voice. Moreover, the auditor is left to his own judgments, uninfluenced by the temper of an audience, its warmth or its coldness. So it is cold type and cold speech by which individuals will be led in great numbers to cool and unhurried judgments. The political blatherskite or demagogue who appeals to his audience through its emotions is . . . stripped of his emotional claptrap."¹ This is an over-sanguine view of the case, but it is interesting to note that if people do come to cool judgment in this manner, it is an automatic and unforeseen result of a new mechanical invention.

In the electioneering argumentation, the "straddle" is characteristic, and the "slogan," especially if alliterative like the famous "Rum, Romanism, and Rebellion," is a handy weapon. There are times when appeals seem to cancel out.

"I can think of several reasons why I might vote against Wilson," said a puzzled Independent, "but I can't think of one why I should vote for Hughes." This doubter has been adjured: "If you want to pay twenty dollars a barrel for flour, vote for Wilson." Others have proclaimed: "'The present moment is our own, the next we never saw'; Wilson has given us prosperity, and he's good enough for me. Besides, didn't he make Congress pass an Eight-Hour law for the railways, and won't he be sure to go ahead on the same line till we all get it? Wilson for mine, I say, and let the logic-choppers chop away till they're tired." "An amusing — or, if you choose so to take it, a depressing — contribution to the campaign in its more childish aspects is furnished by the news that Mr. Henry Ford, as the result of 'an inspiring talk' with the President, put all the women in his factory on the five-dollars-a-day minimum wage basis. This

¹ "Abolishing Witchcraft," in *N. Y. Times* (July 9, 1926).

move, on the eve of the election, is expected to swing an enormous number of Illinois women voters into the Wilson column.

"How large a proportion of the voters of the United States are going to be swayed in their decision on the seventh of November by considerations of this degree of political profundity, we would not undertake to say. Whether it is one-half, or one-fourth, or three-fourths, however, makes little difference. In this country, and in every other, the body of citizens who rise hardly, if at all, above this level in their political thinking, is very great — so great that one might be inclined, in reflecting upon it, to take an utterly despondent view of the nature and prospects of democratic government." Pickwick is recalled to show the conditions of almost a century ago, when the franchise in England was the privilege of a very limited class. "Nevertheless, this despondency would be misplaced, this pessimism unjustified. In the first place, the thing is largely illusory, the common man is not such a fool as he seems. It is, in the main, the man who wants to vote against Wilson that finds him responsible for the price of flour, and the man who wants to vote for him that gives him credit for the demand for labor. And, what is still more important, whatever 'the other half' may be thinking, elections are determined, nine times out of ten, by that fraction to whom arguments really appeal."¹

This conclusion is highly sanguine and optimistic. The fact that the "arguments" — in particular the *post hoc propter hoc* argument, which confuses causality with sequence in time — are the stock in trade of the parties, in assault, in defense, betrays the essentially non-intellectual character of the whole proceeding. Consider the fervid and very likely sincere accusations that the panic of 1893, along with the deficit in the Treasury, was due to change in administration, or even to the wicked personal extravagance of the new President, who wasted national resources on duck-shooting

¹ "Without Alternatives," and "How the Other Half Thinks," in the *Nation*, CIII (N. Y., Nov. 2, 1916).

in Chesapeake Bay. One party is just like the other, but the examples that come to mind are chiefly from that party which, having been in almost continuous power, has been correspondingly scandalized by occasional reverses whereby the government has fallen temporarily into the hands of their totally inexperienced adversaries; and the imbecile action of the Democrats in the 'nineties has lent at least superficial justification to the strictures of their opponents. While it cannot be conceded that the symbol of the wisest of beasts completely befits the one, it cannot be denied that, on their merits, each could file an impressive claim to the long-eared totem.

The personal element plays a large part in elections. The rival candidates are endowed by their supporters with the stock virtues of the mores — honesty, for example — that all classes can be expected to approve, and often the attempt is made to “blacken the character” of the opposition candidate by reference to delinquencies, actual or fabricated, in his past life. Lincoln was ridiculed as a hopeless boor; Cleveland, Roosevelt, and Wilson were slandered. Roosevelt, hardened as he was to unfairness, forced an examination of the charge that he was a heavy drinker, won his case, and received nominal damages. “Our” candidate is the man-as-he-should-be¹; the other fellow is not. When we talk about the former, we adjust our revelations to the tastes of the hearers: before people of a certain code we attribute to him all the locally esteemed virtues which we deny to his rival — the latter drinks hard liquor, which our man never does; in

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, §§ 206–207.

certain other quarters, however, we assert that our man is a fine, jolly, open-hearted, tolerant character, whereas the opposition candidate is a dull prig. It is true enough that the so-called "best minds" — the *élite* of intellectuality — do not seem to get along in politics as well as a certain other, warmer type of man, who has more of what is called intuition, or magnetism, or working knowledge of his constituency,¹ that is, a better acquaintance with the mores of the masses. His ampler and more sensitive ear is better attuned to ground-noises.

The following truth should never be lost to sight, when viewing the "public man": "It is one of the infirmities of the public mind that whatever is said or done by a public man, however much out of his own proper jurisdiction and range of inquiry, commands an attention not conceded even to those who speak under the known privilege of professional knowledge."² People have been known to listen to "views" of social questions from persons whose claim to attention has rested solely upon having batted a ball over a fence or pounded an antagonist into unconsciousness.

In any case, there is an unflagging attempt to enlist prejudice by appealing to the mores, in order to carry an election, that is, to bring about a selection in our ways of doing things as a nation or smaller community. And yet this scheme of procedure has survived out of long selection and is, almost by common consent, conceived to be the fairest and most enlightened way of securing such selection. Everyone has his vote, we

¹ "Best Minds in Politics," letter in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 13, 1924).

² De Quincey, *Essay on Oxford*, quoted in *N. Y. Times* (July 18, 1925).

say, under the modern democratic system, which is itself the product of selection through tremendous social upheavals. There is, indeed, a "pathos" of democracy, but in view of its spread over the civilized world, we are almost forbidden to believe that it is not a better adapted form than those which preceded it. It has freed public opinion¹ and opened the door of opportunity. And certainly no better case for rational selection could be made out for the systems that preceded it.

If we seek to focus what light we have upon selection in the mores, we find that dissatisfaction leads to an effort to secure change, and that the effort is directed in a more or less blind way toward the better realization of local and personal interests. The latter type of interest, almost always at the bottom, can appear legitimately only as a group or class (societal) interest. Hence the class-conflict, the clumsy straining after a better, or a less bad, standard of living, somewhat idealized out of the class mores: a "full dinner pail" for some, more "protection for national industry" for others, and so on. A measure is damned by describing it as a death-blow to some local interest. There is always the promise to "do something" for the farmer, for the laborer, or for somebody else; that is, to ease up the competition in which he is engaged with his fellow-men, and to elevate his standard of living. If this is not societal selection in his favor, it is hard to give it a name. These beneficiaries seldom approach the "peaceful revolution" in a disinterested, society-regarding state of mind; at best their theory is that the

¹ Keller, A. G., *War to Peace*, ch. VIII.

state can do anything, and they propose to tell it what to do, at least for themselves — or for everybody, as with communists and socialists.

On the part of the highminded there is naturally much criticism of such a system: "broad-sides against lawless minorities, time-serving politicians and supineness of government that fails to enforce the law." The citizen "has come to know that from the average man now running for office he must accept either evasion or doctrine designed for the minute to please him and appeal to his prejudice, irrespective of whether or not it is calculated to plunge the whole United States into disaster."¹ The establishment of the "short ballot" is advocated,² as a device for promoting discrimination in selection.

Extended attention is here given to the election because it is the characteristic modern form, which has displaced and replaced its antecedents, of selection among national ways. Preceding contentions are, in some measure, epitomized in the person of the demagogue or political boss.

"The man we call boss is the agent of those who wish to control politics in their own interest. . . . They haven't any politics at all. That is the point, and there is no difference between a democratic boss and a republican boss, because neither of them is working for his party. They are both working for their clients."³

It is needless to say, to American readers at least, that the methods of the boss are as far as possible from broad and rational policy. He is a specialist in holding out fantastic hopes which he

¹ Dawes, C. G., reported in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 23, 1923).

² McAneny, G., "The Essence of Common Sense," in *N. Y. Times* (May 17, 1914), pp. 185 and 387, below.

³ Wilson, W., "Address to Princeton Students," in *Associated Press Report* (Sept. 26, 1912).

knows will not be critically assessed, and in alibis which he hopes will get him past awkward situations. The function of the demagogue in a democracy is outlined by Lecky.¹

"Everyone," he says, "who will look facts honestly in the face can convince himself that the public opinion of a nation is something quite different from the votes that can be extracted from all the individuals who compose it. There are multitudes in every nation who contribute nothing to its public opinion; who never give a serious thought to public affairs, who have no spontaneous wish to take any part in them; who, if they are induced to do so, will act under the complete direction of individuals or organizations of another class. . . . And in a pure democracy the art of winning and accumulating these votes will become one of the chief parts of practical politics.

". . . The demagogue will try to persuade the voter that by following a certain line of policy every member of his class will obtain some advantage. He will encourage all his utopias. He will hold out hopes that by breaking contracts, or shifting taxation and the power of taxing, or enlarging the paternal functions of government, something of the property of one class may be transferred to another. He will also appeal persistently, and often successfully, to class jealousies and antipathies. All the divisions which naturally grow out of class lines and the relations between employer and employed will be studiously inflamed. Envy, covetousness, prejudice, will become great forces in political propagandism. Every real grievance will be aggravated; every redressed grievance will be revived; every imaginary grievance will be encouraged. If the poorest, most numerous, and most ignorant class can be persuaded to hate the smaller class, and to vote solely for the purpose of injuring them, the party manager will have achieved his end. To set the many against the few becomes the chief object of the electioneering agent."

Professor Sumner used to dilate upon the absurdity of setting up a question upon which experts were divided (the tariff, the currency system) for several millions of at best partially informed people to vote on.

¹ *Democracy and Liberty*, I, 22-23.

It is pertinent to inquire "whether we have developed intellectual and moral capacities that can guide the stupendous machine we have set up. Here is government, for example, which has to deal with 'complicated' bond issues, with 'subtle' transportation problems, with 'involved' plans of taxation and with 'technical' educational problems; and yet elections are fought out on issues involving these matters of which the majority of voters have no adequate conception, though we proceed as if we had and sometimes elect men who are as ignorant as ourselves."¹

"Propositions as to public policy," says Holmes,² "rarely are unanimously accepted, and still more rarely, if ever, are capable of unanswerable proof. They require a special training to enable anyone even to form an intelligent opinion about them. In the early stages of law, at least, they generally are acted on rather as inarticulate instincts than as definite ideas for which a rational defense is ready."

Sumner³ writes of "legislation by clamor" as follows: "On the one hand, the highest wisdom of those who want anything now is to practice terrorism, to make themselves as disagreeable as possible, so that it shall be necessary to conciliate them, and those who appeal to reason find themselves disregarded. On the other hand, the public men seek peace and quiet by sacrificing anyone who cannot or does not know enough to make a great clamor in order to appease a clamorous faction. It is thought to be the triumph of practical statesmanship to give the clamorers something which will quiet them, and a new and special kind of legislative finesse has been developed, viz., to devise projects which shall seem to the clamorous petitioners to meet their demands, yet shall not really do it.

"The most important case of legislation of this kind which has been passed in this country is the Bland Silver Bill. It contains no rational plan for accomplishing any purpose whatever. It never had any purpose which could be stated intelligibly. It does not introduce the double standard, does not help debtors, and if it favors silver miners at all, does so in an insignificant degree. It

¹ Fosdick, R., "Catching up with Science," quoted in *N. Y. Times* (June 22, 1922).

² In *Vegelahn vs. Gunter*, 167 Mass., 92.

³ In *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 186-187.

satisfies the vanity of a few public men, quiets the clamor of a very noisy faction who did not know what they wanted and do not know whether they have got it or not, complicates the monetary system of the country, and contains possibilities of great mischief or great loss. It was passed as a patched-up compromise under the most rhythmical and best sustained clamor ever brought to bear on a public question. Those who raised the clamor went off content because they thought that they had obtained *something*, and they now resist the repeal of the law because they would feel that they had lost *something*."

That men do not vote on the merits of a case, the sectional division of the parties (as in 1896) would indicate. They vote for what promises to come nearest to satisfying their interests. From the standpoint of one who is looking to see rational selection applied comprehensively in the development of intelligent policies, this is indeed absurd. And it becomes the more ridiculous when the very mechanism of the election is, as it were, devised to thwart intelligent voting, and to throw the management into the hands of specially interested parties.

"It may be said without reserve that the sound reform of the ballot is a condition precedent to any real and lasting improvement in the management of political affairs throughout all the Union. It is absurd to ask the voter to pass on principles or policies, however good in themselves, when he is so handicapped by a clumsy ballot and frequent elections that it is physically impossible for him definitely to record his will. It is useless to urge him to vote only for good men and good measures when the conditions in which his vote is cast reduce him to a blind guess as to the net result of the vote. And we especially urge on those who are sincerely convinced that more 'direct' share for the voters in the Government will accomplish needed changes that no really direct or effective share in government can be attained until the short ballot is secured. You cannot get rid of the professionals when you leave the mechanism

of politics so intricate and confused that only professionals can run it.”¹

The system under which we live sometimes entangles us to the point of impotency. “No one who is familiar with the practical workings of our political system . . . would expect either the Fifteenth or Eighteenth Amendment to be repealed within measurable time. So far as one can see, therefore, we are shut up to the alternative of their attempted enforcement by soldiers and police and special agents and detectives and spies, or to their abrogation over a great part of the land by local initiative and common consent. Either alternative is humiliating and degrading,” but there seems to be no other. “The moral sense, as well as the common sense, of very many people is affronted by a policy which will expend millions of dollars and use the methods of Tzarist Russia and the Spanish Inquisition to enforce one provision of law, while others of far greater significance and public importance are accorded conventional treatment or less.”²

CAN “THE CLASSES” SELECT FOR “THE MASSES”?

If assent is given to preceding evidence and its interpretation, it cannot be asserted that enlightened, rational selection prevails to any comprehensive degree throughout the evolution of even the most civilized societies. The masses are far from saturation with knowledge, even in the most advanced countries. It is held by many, however, that the enlightened leading

¹ *N. Y. Times* (May 17, 1914); Seymour, C., and Frary, D. P., *How the World Votes*, 2 vols. (Springfield, Mass.).

² Butler, N. M., reported in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 27, 1923).

classes, no matter by what standard they are selected, can lead by example. "An aristocracy acts in this way. It suggests standards of elegance, refinement, and nobility, and the usages of good manners, from generation to generation, are such as have spread from the aristocracy to other classes."¹ Possibly there is here some opportunity for the exercise of rational selection by the leading classes, which will be imitated by the rest. But, Sumner goes on, "such influences are unspoken, unconscious, unintentional. If we admit that it is possible and right for some to undertake to mold the mores of others, of set purpose, we see that the limits within which any such effort can succeed are very narrow, and the methods by which it can operate are strictly defined. The favorite methods of our time are legislation and preaching. These methods fail because they do not affect ritual, and because they always aim at great results in a short time. Above all, we can judge of the amount of serious attention which is due to plans for 'reorganizing society,' to get rid of alleged errors and inconveniences in it. We might as well plan to reorganize our globe by redistributing the elements in it."

The truth of these remarks is not evident to all. Schemes like the one projected some years ago, to win the world to Christianity (Protestant Christianity) within a generation, are as fanciful as any perpetual motion project. But if there are ways in which even modest results can be secured, these should not be passed over. Following the suggestion in the passage just quoted, it would seem that the most promising

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 99.

place in the society to apply rational direction to societal life is among the "leading classes." This brings us around again, but along a somewhat different avenue of approach, to the question raised above,¹ as to the influence of a dominant class upon the mores of other classes in a society. Only now the query is a little more precise, for we are now confining our attention to rational selection. One point here is quite clear: the dominating class has a better chance than the rest to get knowledge upon which to base a rational selection. It is better educated.

If we have the educated in power, then do we not have the class best equipped to exercise rational selection in a position to exercise it? Even if it has only a little more power than the rest, always assuming that it has more knowledge, it is better equipped for the function.

This is in some respects, and despite very evident and discouraging examples to the contrary, a somewhat hopeful view. Let us consider it in perspective and see what there has been in it. What has been the influence of the aristocracy of the educated, and what are its limits? The chief and medicine-man at the outset, even when they were not one and the same person, represented the knowledge of the group; the councils were the experienced members of the society; and so the destiny of the latter was intrusted, so far as it depended on reason at all, to those who rose to the top. These had behind them, then, the political and religious power, the prize of the intra-group class-struggle, which, by reason of some superiority, had been awarded them.

¹ Pp. 137-139.

This they could use to control the rest; and provided they did not too directly oppose the mores residing in the "masses," they could make this and that change toward what they thought expedient. They were a minority generally, but well-knit and organized, and so were able to impose their will, within limits set by the mores, upon the majority. If they went beyond these limits, they were overthrown — the "majority-worm" will turn, if uncomfortable enough¹ — but they gradually learned not to do that. They had certain mores of their own and certain ideas about the mores expedient to the societal welfare, and they were able to enforce them upon the whole group. If they acted insistently, patiently, and tactfully, they could crowd out certain of the mores, sometimes by almost imperceptible degrees, and could foster others in the same way. The fact that, in their position, they were objects of imitation,² assisted them in this direction.

This is true in any age, and can be seen to-day as of old. The custom of subjection to authority has strengthened the process. Respect for those in authority over us is inculcated from early years; and also we render unto Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's because it is easier to do that than to put up an unorganized resistance against an organized power. Many of our laws, though they rest upon a clearly rational basis, are regarded as extremely tyrannical by our newer fellow-citizens; but they are obeyed because

¹ "The Majority Worm Turns," in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 4, 1920). The cases of the Adamson Law, prescribed by railway brotherhoods, of daylight-saving, and of prohibition are instanced. Legislators now fear, we are told, defeat for action taken under fear of defeat.

² Pp. 309 ff., below.

they are law, and after a while habit comes in, and the tyranny is felt no more. We learn to adapt ourselves to a steady and not too severe stress. Probably every one of our laws would have seemed intolerable at some preceding rude age, and many foreign statutes so appear to members of any nation. At first there are irritation and evasion; but if enforced for a time, and not too violently in conflict with the mores, the regulations are accepted, for the most part unintelligently, by the bulk of the population, and eventually taken as a matter of course, as a condition of societal life than which no other is known. Where, then, the enlightened hold a position that enables them to "sway public opinion," they can exercise a certain amount of rational selection over the mores. If their ideas can no longer secure the effective sanction of religion, they can at least secure that of the state. By the exercise of such stress there may then occur for the body of a society, supposing the measures of the leaders to have been conceived in terms of society's interests, a certain indirect rational societal selection. This line of argument might be pursued still farther. The lower classes of to-day certainly rank the leading classes of a past age in point of knowledge, at least in some departments of life. Will they not, therefore, in the course of time, secure such share of wisdom as will enable them to modify their own codes for themselves in accord with knowledge?

This is a possibility, perhaps only a pious hope, rather than actuality; the day of general intellectual emancipation is yet afar off. Even for the best educated the power of using knowledge for the welfare of

the society of which they are a part is as yet an uncertain and unreliable one in most departments of societal life. It is a source of never-ending astonishment and disheartenment to observe the ignorance, prejudice, self-seeking, and even superstition displayed in politics by people who are well-informed and of judgment in other lines. Yet it is perfectly natural, after all; the human mind has its ever-present limits and cannot cover much ground thoroughly. It is difficult to look at the large interests of society in a large way, on their merits, for the lesser interests of person, group, constituents, etc., fill the foreground and blur perspective.

Furthermore, we all live so fully in the mores of our limited group that it is next to impossible to set ourselves in others' places, so as correctly and dispassionately to appraise the interests of all the parts of a complicated society. It is asking too much of human beings to expect one group to safeguard the diverging interests of another. Each group must try to get power to realize its own. It is the exceptional statesman who can rise above party and local interests; the perfectly respectable representative of a constituency with peculiar interests will insist upon these in the face even of party leaders, as witness the attitude of the Louisiana senators when the sugar tariff has come under discussion. Genuine statesmanship is exceedingly rare. Politics, as the play of local interests, is common enough, in both senses of that term. For the realization of the interests of the society at large something more powerful and elemental than the ratiocination of individuals or parties must be in operation.

If all this is true, one hesitates to put his money on the conscious, enlightened direction of society's destiny by human brains; taking the field of societal life as a whole, one is forced, reluctantly or not, to admit that, in default of much knowledge and power to use it, we are still thrown back overwhelmingly upon the mores, with all their apparent unreason and caprice, and upon automatic selection. Societal selection is too massive a phenomenon to be at home elsewhere than among masses of men; it is due to the largely unconscious contortions of the whole body of society.

It is limited by conditions in the physical and societal environment, the power of which the would-be innovators are forced to acknowledge when at last they, having been "Outs," have come to be "Ins." Note how the opposition party, the Jeffersonians,¹ for instance, is obliged to continue the policies against which it has been inveighing, or how the British Labor Party must follow on the beaten track.² Says the sagacious printer-statesman:³ "Those who govern, having much business on their hands, do not generally like to take the trouble of considering and carrying into execution new projects. The best public measures are therefore seldom adopted from previous wisdom, but forced by the occasion." It is a commonplace that the "Ins" are conservative, just as the "Outs" are radical. The former have won and are maintaining their position, and are serving their interests best, under the *status quo*; they see no sense in change. This is one of the main

¹ Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays*, p. 329.

² "The Same after Change," editorial in the *N. Y. Times* (July 14, 1930).

³ Franklin, B., *Autobiography* (ed. Aiton), p. 228.

reasons, rising out of the depths of human nature, why adaptive changes are brought about, at the hands of the dominant class, less frequently than one would expect at first sight.

Let us cease considering, therefore, the constituent human elements of a society, and attack the issue on a broader arena. Let us consider the society as a whole, living a life analogous to that of an indivisible organism, and examine the functioning of the whole rather than of its constituent parts.

ARE "THE PEOPLE" RIGHT?

Here we must notice a point of view which can be introduced by citation.¹

A professor of economics, we are told, "has expressed great astonishment at the fact that the currency bill was passed in so excellent a form by a congress in which 'not 10 men understood the subject.' This is the expert's contempt for the intelligence of the average man. The specialist is always astonished at the 'luck' which ordinary people have in making up their minds correctly.

"And yet this 'luck' is democracy's only hope. If the processes of government are too complex and subtle for the average mind, then such a thing as a people successfully self-governed is out of the question. Lawyers often condemn the jury system because the jurors are not 'specialists' in evidence; but a careful study of jury verdicts will show that their decisions are as good as or better on the average than those of judges on questions of fact where such questions are submitted to the court. Congressmen are, to speak within bounds, rather above the average in intelligence, and greatly superior to jurymen; but if, as [the professor] suggests, they were ignorant of the questions involved in the currency bill, they were about in the same position as jurymen seeking the truth honestly and ignorant of the law. The one receives the instructions of the

¹ *Collier's Weekly* (quoted in *New Haven Journal-Courier*, Jan. 20, 1914).

court; the other is favored with the expert instructions of [the professor] and others. The jury takes it upon itself to ignore the instructions once in a while, and the congress refused to accept the opinions of the professors when told by them."

The politician's "ear to the ground" and his anxiety to tend his "fences" are not always as disingenuous and groveling as they are represented to be. He is listening for the seismic vibrations of public opinion. It is the "plain Americans" who win elections for those who understand their inarticulateness and appreciate the tenacity with which they hold to their interests or to what they may be persuaded to view as such. Public opinion is the basis of popular government. Legislators who oppose or misinterpret it have to pay the penalty, unless they can produce, eloquently, a convincing alibi.¹ Newspapers seem often to have a life of their own, and run away with their owners and editors; this is because they are sensitively responsive to public opinion; and, though politics tend to personality, there are always undercurrents which, in the long run, set directions.

It appears, especially in the first of these citations, which would command considerable assent, that special knowledge does not count for much, and that the "common man" is a repository of a sort of elemental, intuitional wisdom which enables him to decide correctly on national policy — that is, to perform a rational act of societal selection. Briefly, public opinion is right where special knowledge may easily go astray. One way of justifying this view about the correctness of public opinion is conveyed by the term "luck" as used in the first quotation. Luck, or chance, is a term used to cover that which is, for the time, unreckonable and

¹ Lowell, A. L., *Public Opinion and Popular Government* (N. Y., 1913); "Plain Americans Won the Election," letter in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 19, 1916); "The Vote on Measures in the Election of 1916," in the *Nation*, CIV, 127 (N. Y., Feb. 1, 1917); Wadsworth, J. W., on legislative reversals of the will of the people, and citing numerous instances, in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 4, 1925).

unpredictable. Attempts are made, in insurance enterprises, for example, to reduce the variable, chance, to a constant. This is done by applying the laws of chance to multitudes of instances, and it is therein seen that pluses and minuses cancel out, leaving a residue upon which such dependence can be placed that business can be done with security. Some people think that a similar residue of dependable truth is gained from the cancellation of opposite or partially conflicting judgments of multitudes of people, irrespective, apparently, of the aptness of such judgments.

This is merely a matter of faith, with the chances against it. Popular judgments have been proved wrong plenty of times in the outcome, based, as they have often been, upon unrelieved ignorance and superstition. But this does not say that they are always wrong when they oppose the conclusions of the specialist, nor yet that they are equally unreliable upon all varieties of issues. No outside observer, however learned, can sense interest as those can who feel its stress directly; and upon some interests men have a sounder judgment than upon others. Hence the conflict of interests, especially in the region of economic self-maintenance, where, as we are to see, they are concrete, objective, and material, may result in an expedient selection among measures which, in their multiplicity and complexity, no single specialist could have the breadth of outlook even to visualize.

A good rule for living in society is for everyone to mind his own business.¹ In general, he is the one who knows most about it. "The toad beneath the harrow

¹ Sumner, W. G., *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*.

knows exactly where each tooth-point goes." A good deal of irritation is caused by "the butterfly upon the road" who "preaches contentment to that toad." If men's most clearly sensed, intimate interests are in their own hands, that is just where they had best be. They then work out into some more general form which becomes "right" in the sense of being expedient. We all defend our own interests, and in so doing, safeguard each other's interests. This produces something far more dependable than any enactment; it is a strong, controlling, automatically acting force that is not going to collapse under the attack of "logic" or "reasoning."

A man is overcharged fraudulently and the case is made public. The rest will support him in his protest, because they can see readily enough that, unless there is resistance, the same thing might well happen to them. No court would dare challenge the public sentiment involved, and no official could stand against it. The result is general honesty.

It is not readily seen that we constantly depend upon each other's honesty. Cases of dishonesty attract a disproportionate attention just because they are irregular. Sharpers and criminals get their chances because of the tendency of people to trust one another. They take advantage of the code of honesty. The importance of this set of the mores can be figured, perhaps, if one were to try to imagine a society in which nobody spoke the truth. Under such a situation, used as we are to the opposite, life would impress us as unlivable. Honesty is, like orderliness, an essential to the persistence of any peace-group; the toleration of dishonesty would be as disastrous to its integrity as that of murder and theft.

Some big questions have simple aspects in which they appear analogous to personal and local issues with which men are familiar. Governmental extravagance and an increased national indebtedness may at once offend the thrifty. "Common people" are ready to support any plausible move against war—to refuse to trade, for instance, with those who start a conflict. Doubtless in some cases they see

the broad outlines of an issue. But it is risky to call such impressions rational; they are emotional, rather. The people are often deceived, so that they support with enthusiasm something that "stands to reason," but does not work out. Few of them know even that they are paying indirect taxes and are easily persuaded of the "self-evident" fact that the foreigner pays the tariff-rates. An essential of rationality is penetrativeness, and real insight comes only with knowledge which the masses of mankind do not possess.

This somewhat anticipates what is next to come. We are now considering a society as a whole and have given up any idea of consistent, rational, society-regarding selection in its mores at the hand of any dominant sub-group. Granted, however, that there is no class or other limited body through which systematic rational selection in the corporate interest can be realized; granted that the possibility of applying rational selection directly and generally cannot be demonstrated; conceding that men have never learned to think in terms of society; is there not some point of entrance into the impersonal societal system itself, some compartment of the mores common to all constituent groups in a society, which admits the rational factor into the selective function?

CHAPTER VI

SELECTION: THE ELEMENT OF RATIONALITY

RATIONAL action, whether selective among the mores or not, is action in the light of verified knowledge. Verification comes through repeated experience. Since life-conditions, especially material ones, remain much the same, almost identical situations are encountered, over and over again, by everybody. By trial and error they are unconsciously or consciously compared, and action takes place in the light of the knowledge thus acquired, verified, and corrected. If the experience is simple, definite, and intimate enough, and is repeated enough times, as in the case of being burnt by fire, anybody in his senses, no matter how predisposed by phantasy, will learn from it and act in its light. Children and savages do that; and the philosopher, while he may profess the whimsy that food and furniture are nothing but swirls in mental currents, is concerned to get palpable meat for actual mastication and does not try to walk through chairs. The rational element is therefore present and active in practical living long before it is recognized as such. It is plain and common sense.

At the end of long ages, this common sense, having been "trained and organized," has become science. Huxley's definition of science as "trained and organized

common sense" cannot be too often repeated. Then a very complicated experience can be artificially simplified, by the experimental method of isolation and control, in the laboratory, and also can be repeated as many times as anyone wishes. Since science deals solely with verifiable matters, verified knowledge is now synonymous with scientific knowledge, and rational action is scientific action.

It would be incongruous to apply to primitive common sense any such high-sounding term, for science is a modern development, with an evolved technique. It also goes behind the merely practical question of what, under recurring conditions, to do, and tries, as "pure" science, to discover the profounder relations of things. In so doing, it emerges with an ever increasing capacity to guide men in practical living; it becomes a more and more effective instrument in human adjustment. Nevertheless, although it is a lineal descendant of primitive common sense, and never loses its family likeness to its ancestor, the qualities it has developed are its own. Training and organization have shaped a common sense that is superficially so different from "plain" common sense that the term "scientific" ill befits the latter. "Rational," as here used, covers both.

As experiences become less simple, definite, and intimate, plain common sense cannot deal with them. They are beyond its scope and grasp. If knowledge is to be extracted from them, it must be done by science. Common sense may solve the question of fishing well enough, but it cannot touch that of flying. It cannot even rise to the plane of issues involving the corporate interests of society, and perhaps science cannot; but if anything can, science can. There is nothing for it, if rational action is desirable, except for science to keep on trying.

The masses of to-day, like the primitive peoples, have common sense and use it as they can. Even savages are not idiots or willfully wrong-headed; they are doing the best they know how, seriously and anxiously, in a business they know full well to be serious. Life to them is anything but child's play or tomfoolery. They are not trying to fail. In their situation we could do no better. In the situation of the masses of to-day we could do no better than they; in fact, as we have already recognized, we act in the same way that they do, uncritically in the mores, except along certain lines where we are scientifically informed or trained. Indeed, we, the advantaged and educated, are often misled, as they are not, by the pseudo-knowledge or thobbery that we have been taught, and show less common sense than they do. It is the masses, we among them for most of our time, who carry the mores along. How much rationality can "the public" apply to selection among them?

Scientific thinking, as distinguished from imagining the agreeable, romancing, "rearranging prejudices," and thobbery in general, is the most trying of human functions, and most men will dodge it; consider the "searching and unforgettable aphorism that there is no expedient to which a man will not resort to avoid the real labor of thinking."¹ "In much wisdom is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."² The novelist³ sometimes presents a truth with graphic freshness:

¹ Butler, N. M., quoted in *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 28, 1928).

² Ecclesiastes, I, 18.

³ Livingstone, F. B., *Under a Thousand Eyes* (N. Y., 1923), p. 129.

“‘Human beings aren’t original. . . . Why should they be, when imitation will get them through life? The average individual spends three quarters of his life exuding what he has absorbed whole in the other quarter. You can’t expect him to think.’ ‘Can’t I, indeed!’ ‘Certainly not. It might make him restless and disturbed. Perhaps if any proportion of the people were to think and act for themselves, it would throw out the entire pattern of human living.’”

THINKING IN TERMS OF SOCIETY

Nevertheless, despite the labor of thought and the admitted defectiveness and actual drawbacks to knowledge, men are obliged to try to know. The only alternative is resignation to discomfort and death. Men have to foresee and plan as best they can; they cannot wait to be fully resolved as to the perfect course. Having as yet no science of society comparable to the science of chemistry, say, to rely upon, and not being able to defer action until such a guide to action can be summoned from the vasty deep of human ignorance — being under compulsion to act promptly, lest we perish — we forecast as well as we can and plan ahead in hope or in desperation. We are as sensible as we know how to be. If we cannot even come to grips with large issues, we potter along with the small.

“The American public,” says Elihu Root, confirming a judgment of Mr. Roosevelt,¹ “cannot think soundly on foreign relations, because it lacks the necessary information and training.”

What is meant by “thinking soundly” comes out in the comment attached by the editor to this utterance: “Now and then one rises to show of what we are capable. Owen Young is our proudest illustration of achievement.” It is not clear who the capable “we”

¹ Reported in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 15, 1930); see p. 85, above.

may be — presumably the American public. If so, the sentiment, though flattering, is venturesome. The gentleman mentioned would seem to be more capable than the general public, certainly so in the matter of experience and knowledge.

Mr. Root himself is not a bad example of capability; few living men have had his experience and knowledge, to say nothing about native ability. In his remarks upon a proposed international agreement,¹ he states three propositions which, he says, underlie all discussions of such devices, and are likely to be overlooked by "the more ardent spirits who would reform the world over night." "The first of them is that public opinion is impotent unless institutions are created through which it can act." The common disapproval of war "will not amount to anything until there is some institution through which it can operate, for the moment there is some insult or some controversy it disappears and the lower instinct of belligerency and hatred takes its place." But "it is not common sense or sound reasoning to insist upon having a perfect institution at the beginning. The great thing is to get a beginning. Get an institution. If it can be developed to fill a need of the world it will be developed." That is to say, produce a variation and let selection take care of it.

"My second point is that in endeavoring to bring about real agreement between many nations actuated by different beliefs and prejudices you have got to begin with the few things they will all agree on." This recognizes the principle of the inverse relation between the size of the peace-group and the number of mores held in common by members of it.

"And my third point is that you must not seek to measure the progress of nations by the foot-rule of our short lives. You must think in terms of generations and centuries. . . .

"It is my deliberate belief that the greatest contributions to the history of world-peace are the negotiations and the exchanges that have failed in their immediate object. The man who has spent himself in the march or on the charge before he reached the breast-works is the greater benefactor to the world than the man who sets the flag. . . .

¹ "Mr. Root on the Geneva Protocol" in *League of Nations Herald*, II, no. 31 (Dec. 15, 1924).

"As things change, the way men think changes with them."

Here is the variety of wisdom which emerges out of long experience in thinking on the broad scale. Few are able to follow such injunctions into action, even if they assent to them, because few have a real grip upon a statesman's course of thought, not having arrived at it along the arduous path of experience with facts, which he has trod. They may even take a statesman to be a politician, with a wholly partisan view; and because they themselves are partisan, they applaud his conclusions as expressive of their own interests.

The public, meaning the masses, cannot do much rationally with international issues. No more can they visualize national issues. It is only as they get down toward personal interests that they are able to introduce the rational element into their judgments. It is granted that any man makes errors due to ignorance and thobbery as regards his personal interests; he has to try to realize them as he sees them, and his vision may be perturbed. Nevertheless he sees them, in contrast to his apprehension of national interests, comparatively clearly, and is likely to act upon what he sees with much more common sense and enlightenment. Likewise he can identify, though not so accurately, the interests of his immediate family; and as his horizon widens to include people of his own locality and manner of life, his judgment still retains the common sense, though in decreasing degree, that is evoked by experience repeated and experiences compared. Far beyond the interests of those whose lives and mores closely resemble his own, he cannot go, for he has not the experience.

The rich man may imagine that he understands the poor man through "sympathy"; the fact is that such understanding can arrive only as a result of common experience. And it is very risky,

at that, to assume that common experience can be acquired by simply living with others, under their life-conditions, a short while. To those life-conditions belongs, as a very vital element in them, the impossibility of emerging from them at will, to say nothing of the perspective of a whole past life under them. It is very likely impossible to put one's self in any one else's place, so as to see life as he does.

The conclusion is that men exercise what strength of mind and what knowledge they have upon their personal and narrowly local interests, and that there is not much left over to sustain the far greater strain of comprehending the more distant, less tangible, wider interests. Men may act upon verified knowledge as respects their personal and local interests, which fill their short perspective, while merely "reasoning" when it comes to the wider interests, much more difficult to grasp and assess, of society. To see rational control by the masses of men over the destiny of society is an illusion, and when "The People" are assured that they are directing their corporate course by passing judgment upon societal policies, the speaker is at best dealing in metaphor. Unquestionably the process of selection among the mores has an element of the rational in it, but that is far from justifying the contention that the automatic process has been replaced. It is the aim of this chapter merely to consider how, to what degree, and at what points the rational element has, up to now, entered into societal selection.

There should be recalled once more the inveterate error lurking in the interpretation of what we have learned to know as "retrospective rationality," the essential sense that appears in everything that has been worked out by natural, automatic processes. When the time of reflection comes, and it is perceived that, for example,

the rules of modesty, decency, and propriety have produced certain beneficial societal consequences in the way of restraint, it is assumed that the origin of the rules was in the purpose to reach the consequences. Then a surprise or disillusionment is due; for upon examination of the facts, such practices as the performance of certain bodily functions in private, various devices proved hygienic in the outcome, the covering of certain parts of the body, even the etiquette that proscribes rude boasting and prescribes self-deprecation, are found to have originated in fear of magic, of the evil eye, or of the jealousy of higher powers. They had no planful origin, though they turned out to have sense in them. Even the killing of the old can be justified, after the act, on the ground that it does away with their hampering conservatism.

THE QUESTION OF VERIFICATION

Repeated verification upon fact will prove anything; neither logic nor prejudice can stand long before "a shovelful of facts in the face." In the natural sciences, verification can be attained through laboratory experimentation, wherein the environment can be controlled and artificialized and the object of experimentation treated freely — even put to death. This kind of thing may not be done in the domain of the social sciences, for the mores forbid man to experiment upon man. What goes by the name of social experimentation lacks rigor in its processes and emerges with vague and inconclusive results. The best the social scientist can do is about equal to the worst the natural scientist has to put up with: to wait on nature to perform quasi-experiments for him and to search history for those she may have performed. He seizes upon a chance one of these, such as the case of the Pitcairn Island society, where a company of shipwrecked people were forced to live in almost complete isolation, with

pathetic eagerness. And, after all, there is not much profit even in experience if it has been recorded by amateurs, in view of the loss of detail, the omission of what is later found to be of commanding importance, and other defects. As to the actual events themselves, nature next to never repeats societal phenomena in the same terms; the historical "experiment," unlike that in the laboratory, can never be exactly duplicated. Nature, indeed, even acts furtively, as it were, so that men do not recognize the scientific significance of what she has been doing till too late.

The social scientist must get the best tests he can and put up with their insufficiencies. In particular, he must know where to look for them. Where, then, in the societal system, can verification be found? Where shall one search for cases of selection based upon verified knowledge? Where in the range of the mores are faulty adaptations to life-conditions most convincingly demonstrated to be inadequate and unfit?

Faulty adjustments, wherever they occur, result in the pain of maladjustment; dissatisfaction due to the non-realization or to the actual frustration of human interests may occur in an equal degree anywhere in the societal field. But, whereas in some parts of that range it seems almost impossible conclusively to detect the causes of dissatisfaction and then remove them, in the case of others there is a general persuasion that the relation between effect and cause can be found and satisfaction attained. It is a bold man who believes that the race can be bred so as to be free of the physically and mentally weak; but everyone expects as a

matter of course that fifty years will see the solution of many a present and arising difficulty in the line of material progress. Nobody in 1890 could reasonably expect the abolition of prostitution within any definite period; but there were those, other than Jules Verne, who regarded aërial navigation as merely a question of time. Men look to and depend upon scientific procedure all the time in some parts of the societal field; they take up the war against smallpox, typhoid, infantile paralysis, and even cancer, with confidence in their ultimate success. They realize that there are probably unknown physical elements, and are not forced to regard that man as a wizard who discloses them; they expect more surprises like the discovery of radium and the development of radio and television. They have no hope, however, that religious mores will be adjusted as the result of some scientific discovery or synthesis of a positive character; or that sociologists of a visionary type, or any type, may be able to set the relations of the sexes upon a sure basis, or counteract alienation from the church. They do not hope for inventions in religion or marriage which can be tested with certainty and introduced with general or intelligent approval. Such results will come "in the millennium" — that is, when the conditions of life as now lived shall have been altered as the result of an unpredictable or even supernaturally directed development.

Examples crowd to the page. Consider what can confidently be expected of a gas-engine as compared with a tariff. We all trust the former with our lives. And the confidence is but rarely betrayed. Only a few are willing to bet even their boots on the working of a

new tariff schedule. It is not hard to demonstrate to an ignorant person in this country that he should learn to read and write; he can see that by living in any civilized society. Similarly for his interest is it, and not alone in England and here, that he shall use the English language. Tests lie all about him, and are immediate and decisive. But try to persuade him by abstract or historical argument to give up the vendetta, to renounce anarchistic leanings, or to change his religion, and you fail. There are no immediate and decisive tests at hand. You cannot demonstrate that interest will be subserved by change; you cannot so much as secure visualization of evil consequences. Even illness due to filth, where visualization is becoming more practicable, can be referred unverifiably to too many other causes, for instance, the evil eye.

If we seek to generalize from the multitudes of available instances on the order of those just given, the only conclusion at which we can arrive is, that the more nearly the mores represent direct reaction on environment in the actual struggle for material aids to existence, the more convincing a test do they undergo; and, conversely, the more derived the societal forms the more clearly do they fall under traditional criteria rather than test on fact. The nearer the mores come to the struggle for existence, the more closely they concern maintenance, the more vivid is the demonstration of their expediency or in expediency.

Let us look into this matter of the incidence or entrance of verified knowledge into societal selection somewhat more systematically, beginning with cases that seem to be farthest removed from the possibility. For centuries savage peoples have had presented to

them sets of religious mores differing from their own. They have generally been willing goodnaturedly to take on such parts of these as they could understand — that is, such portions as were not too far removed from their own beliefs and practices. But it has always been very difficult to get them to replace what they have with something quite different; often it has been merely the forms that have been taken over, and these forms have been filled with a content that identified them with the primitive type which it was desired to replace. There are also numerous cases where primitive peoples have pretended to accept the teachings of missionaries because they saw material profit in so doing; a classic case is where certain natives, having been bribed to participate in religious services by the gift of blankets, when the gifts ceased to materialize, struck, stating their position lucidly: "No more blanket, no more hallelujah."¹ To secure any sort of convincing verification, a religion must often take recourse to similarly concrete criteria. If it is presented in a setting of medical care and industrial advantage, it may be accepted, at least in form, along with what accompanies it. But there is no way of comparing two sets of religious mores as such so as to exhibit by test their relative superiorities and inferiorities. Religious teachers are quite correct when they assert that the matter of religion is one that is above and beyond scientific verification.

It is similarly difficult to present compelling reasons for the preference of one set of sex-mores, or one form of marriage and the family, over another. Against many mores, first of all, no verifiable case whatever can be made out, for they represent adjustments as sound as those in nature. There is no way to prove to people who are accustomed to go unclothed, that it is better to wear clothing — that our so-called "sense of modesty" is always sensible. Indeed, the forcing of clothing upon savages has often shown itself, in the outcome, to be disastrous.² If savages adopt clothing, it is rather for vanity's sake than otherwise. And it is useless to inveigh against bride-price, or dowry, or other premarital mores, for a good case can be made for them all, in their setting, as sound adjustments. It is impossible to show a polygamist that his system is inexpedient,

¹ Martius, C. F. P. von, *Beiträge*, I, 463; Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Contact."

² Cases in Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Clothing."

while ours is rational, just as it is to demonstrate that leaving food on a grave is senseless, while strewing flowers upon it is right and good. You cannot persuade a primitive woman that she is being deprived of rights by man, the oppressor, or that beating is not a sign of affection (as compared with indifference); she cannot be made to perceive that she is miserable, when she knows she is not. This would be another "dumb issue," like that of prosperity in a campaign. To an African it is ridiculous that a man should leave all others and cleave to his wife; to him the blood-bond of kinship outranks all the rest. This is his major premise, and it is notoriously difficult to upset popular and longstanding major premises; when they are given up, it is always as a result of profound changes in the course of a long and slow evolution — changes which demand whole series of selections that no human mind is able to forecast — changes due to what we call automatic selection.

After what has been said above, it seems almost superfluous to cite the case of government and politics. White men have succeeded in displacing native regulation by the elders and have appointed a chief; but it is safe to say that they never persuaded the natives to agree to this by merely adducing evidence. Further, they have found afterward that they have really done something that has not been able to withstand actual test; for the chief has failed to command respect, not being one of the wise old "fathers," and then, when it has been seen advisable to restore the old system, it has been found that the elders have now lost standing and the whole system has been reduced to chaos. It had worked satisfactorily before, except that its theory had not appealed to the white man. So, too, has a bloody despot been deposed because to us that sort of ruler is always bad, later to be restored by reason of the observed fact that he alone could keep order.¹ These are cases of an enforced selection by outsiders; it almost goes without the saying that no amount of verbal proof could have persuaded the natives to make such changes of their own volition. No verification could have been presented to them to demonstrate conclusively the expediency of a proposed departure from usage.

Modern instances are numerous enough. Occasionally college men have been made into protectionists or free-traders by some com-

¹ Ratzel, F., *Völkerkunde*, I, 294, 242.

elling captain of facts; still, not a few of them, later in life, while recognizing the value of an intellectual experience in the range of "pure reason," have somewhat patronizingly explained that practical considerations had caused them to depart from the teachings of "dear old So-and-so." He was, after all, pretty "academic," pretty "theoretical" — as if scientific theory were not the most practical thing in the world, proved to be so by Pasteur, if by no one else.

When it comes to the mores having to do with pleasure and vanity, including fashion, ostentation, prestige, and the gratification of the senses through art and music, the criterion is not fact but taste. *De gustibus non est disputandum*. All one needs to do is to listen to a discussion between a classicist and a romanticist, or between one who abhors and one who worships the "new" art or the "new" music, to realize the faint and pallid condition of verifiability in this range of the mores. The only standard to go by, in this field, is popularity; and that standard is an unpredictable variable. If there are underlying verities here, they are, as yet, not factually demonstrable. There are a few forms of pleasure which, by exception and reluctantly, have been renounced because they were bad for health, such as the use of various poisons; but gambling, despite all that can be with reason charged against it, has persisted with the civilized, as with the barbarian.

Systems of property-holding can be discussed endlessly without persuading anybody, and so can the more abstract phases of the economic organization. There is no finality in these matters, as there is in a laboratory test, especially where they verge on the political. Practical considerations cause peoples to become socialistic, or individualistic — not the demonstrations of a Marx, but personal and group-discontent to which the theorist lends a show of reason, thus generalizing and universalizing a program of selection. Then the discontent has a program and a slogan such as "Property is Robbery"; "The Dictatorship of the Proletariat"; "The Patrimony of the Dispossessed"; "The Right of the Have-nots to Have"; and so on.

Let us set in contrast to the above cases, where argument is of no avail, the following: The houses of the Herero of Damaraland are always an hour or more from the water-courses. Animals come at night to drink, and it is dangerous to be near, for "to them be-

longs the land.”¹ “Dynamite is now frequently used by the natives here as in New Guinea, as they have learned from the traders that it is an easy method of obtaining big hauls, and anything that saves them labour they immediately adopt, as long as it does not interfere with their old customs.”² These quotations might almost serve as a text for the development of the proposition that the rational element can enter into the selective process only where verification is swift and sure. To be noted, however, is the final proviso, about the old customs, which often considerably limits the acceptance of the otherwise most convincing test; and it must not be assumed, either, that adherence to the old customs is invariably unjustifiable.

When it comes to the introduction of instruments and ways for the prosecution of the struggle for existence, the convincing test is usually at hand. If one wishes to persuade a savage that a steel axe is better than one of stone, he hands him one and invites him to go out and try it on a tree or on the dog. If an enterprising dealer wishes to replace in the market one kind of soap by another, he sends out sample cakes and bids the beneficiary to try for himself. Or, if he knows he has a manifestly superior or unique article, he describes and compares: “This soap of ours will float; soap that floats is obviously more convenient; other soaps sink and you can’t locate them, or you step on them and run the risk of slipping, hitting your head on the faucet, and drowning ignobly. Ask for ours, and don’t let anyone palm off an inferior article on you!”

Contrast the possibility of a clean-cut test of this sort with the impossibility of demonstrating what ought to be done in the face of the increasing cost of living, the ill of unemployment, or the situation revealed by the question: What ails education? In such matters there can be no unanimity as to what to do because we do not even agree as to causes. Nor, if some one expedient is launched, can we hope to attain a convincing test. What often happens is that both sides are not only of the same opinion still, but both are piping, in chorus: “I told you so,” and with some justification, for such multiplicity of causation enters into issues of this sort that causal isolation is not at all easy. And yet there can be no

¹ Büttner, C. G., *Hinterland von Walfischbai und Angra Pequena*, pp. 30-31.

² Hardy and Elkington, *The Savage South Seas*, pp. 117-118.

clean-cut decision unless one only of the contenders can harp upon a triumphant note. What really happens, in a great number of cases, is that disputants lose interest and do not care to await the outcome, but run off after some other prophet who has a happy thought and keeps on vociferating.

To contrast even more sharply the verifiable and the unverifiable, compare the divergence of views between the contestants in the late war as to economic and political issues with their complete agreement as to ballistics. The Germans did not despise and refuse to use the French 75-cm. gun when captured; they turned it at once on the French, accepting as a matter of course any captured information about the best way to use it; and it verified. The Allies promptly adopted the poison-gas of the enemy; they had seen what it could do and its effects were not debatable. They did not fuss and fume over whether it would work or not, and in the end get nowhere; they did not get tired of the issue and go off on some tangent.

At the risk of elaborating the obvious — which, indeed, is not seldom the only way of awakening consciousness of it — several further instances are to be cited. It was a fearsome experience for the savage, before he knew how to generate fire, to lose his blaze. No argument about this was necessary; he knew that without it he would be exposed to misery and death. If someone could teach him how to rub two sticks, or knock two stones, together so as to get a spark, he was all ready to learn. The Indian did not take long to perceive the value of the horse; nor does the cowboy in the arid regions. The former speedily came almost to live on horseback, while the latter, realizing that horse-stealing was the equivalent of murder, or almost, tolerated no debate over the swift destruction of the horse-thief. When everybody realizes that his own life may be preserved as a result of animal-experimentation, the opposition to so-called vivisection will disappear and we shall hear no more about animals as “citizens of the world.”¹

Resistance to the new is not, as has been noted, always wholly senseless. It is not mere hard-shell obscurantism to oppose “change for the sake of change.” The old customs may have an unperceived expediency. Savages may hold to their bows and arrows and blowpipes for the good reason that they are silent; and, under

¹ *N. Y. Times* (May 20, 1930).

the circumstances, silence is preferable to noisy power. Flintlocks were better adjustments, in the moist climate of Singapore, than percussion-cap muskets; the caps speedily deteriorated under humidity.¹ The negroes found the flintlock more expedient because no percussion-caps or fixed ammunition was needed. A companion-piece, from the same source, is the cutting-down and building-up of a schooner into junk-form, because the Chinese were not experienced in European sailing-methods. The schooner was too good an adjustment for their state of knowledge; and the same was true of savages who could not learn to ascend or descend stairs without a sort of extravagant clumsiness that led to repeated and ridiculous falls.²

Coincidence, which so often supports the false, not seldom provides a pseudo-verification. The old customs of the Africans raised a prejudice against the use of iron for hoes or for rails; and, in this case, were visibly justified, for the drought predicted by the religious authorities did not fail to come off.³ One tribe began to make pottery, but the man who was most evidently identified with the innovation died, and it was given up; another tribe gave up the camel because its appearance was contemporary with that of small-pox.⁴

It is even difficult to introduce an undoubtedly beneficial innovation, if it runs against use and wont. Such is the case with a new coin,⁵ designed to bring order out of currency confusion. Still, when the confusion is visualized and makes enough inconvenience for men of affairs, in their private dealings, it is not opposed; the case of the National Banking System and of the Federal Reserve System are instances. The masses were indifferent, not understanding, and yet having no particular objection to raise. On the other hand, there is all sorts of criticism of those who do not wear mourning, or who instruct survivors not to wear mourning for them,⁶ or

¹ Tylor, E. B., *Anthropology*, p. 19; Andriessen, "Münzen und andere Tauschmittel in Afrika," in *Ausland*, V, 45.

² Granville and Roth, "Niger Coast Protectorate," in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute*, XXVIII, 108.

³ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Iron," "Coincidence."

⁴ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Post hoc."

⁵ "Passing of the Haikwan Tael," in *Literary Digest* (Jan. 2, 1930).

⁶ *N. Y. Times* (Aug. 22, 1909). Cases of Lady Morell Mackenzie and of Edward VII and Alexandra.

who direct that their bodies are to be cremated, or who cremate their relatives. A middle case is that of the thirteen-month calendar: several noted business houses announce that they are going to try it; but there will be much inertia to be overcome and also religious objection, for it will "shift the Sabbath."¹ Resistance compounded of real reason, inertia, and a love for God, as shown by adherence to "God's time," has been offered to daylight-saving.² It was strong enough to nullify a Presidential veto, some years ago, but is probably yielding to the test of experience. There was debate enough about this issue. It accomplished little or nothing; what was important was that the War set afloat the variation and gave the country a chance to try it out, which illustrates anew the importance of making a beginning. One becomes skeptical about debate and sometimes envies the primitive man who had no time for discussion but had to act more by way of unconscious reflex if he were to avoid destruction. The other side of this matter has been eloquently championed by Bagehot.³ "Discussion," writes Wilson,⁴ "is the greatest of all reformers. It rationalizes everything it touches. It robs principles of all false sanctity and throws them back upon their reasonableness. If they have no reasonableness, it ruthlessly crushes them out of existence and sets up its own conclusions in their stead." This seems, taking the mores as a whole, to be an exaggeration, unless discussion is to be regarded as protracted enough to allow of an accompanying change of conditions, or unless discussion means keeping the issue to the fore and securing publicity for the facts. But most discussion is not of this type; it is participated in by persons who have no right to an opinion, because they know little or nothing, who depend upon formal logic, tricks of oratory and of writing, appeal to prejudice and other instrumentalities irrelevant to the merits of the case.

The fact is that we can make few satisfactory diagnoses as to what is social good or ill, for the two are always mixed and time and experience only can winnow them out. It might be contended that

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 11 and 28, 1929); letter on "Shifting the Sabbath" (Dec. 1, 1929; also Dec. 29, 1928).

² *N. Y. Times* (April 28, 1924).

³ *Physics and Politics*, chapter on "The Age of Discussion."

⁴ *The State* (N. Y., 1898) p. 139.

if the benefit of society were the rule, we should at once make infanticide and the killing of the old into institutions and control them. Next, we should apply euthanasia to all idiots and to those suffering from hopelessly incurable maladies, so that they are a burden to themselves and others. Then we should subject tramps and vagabonds to rigid repression and compulsory labor under state regulation. We should go on to establish regulations for marriage, and only the healthy should be allowed to breed. The last would be the most important and difficult and the investigation of the laws of reproduction and the invention of appropriate devices would be most important tasks for scientists and statesmen. Here is a program of scientific selection. The chance of its realization can be estimated by any reflective person; and one can figure the popularity of a group that would seriously present it. Above all, sentiment would be outraged by any such assault upon accepted usage and humanitarian principles, and sentiment has its justification.

Perhaps the crowning irrationality of the present is the widespread conviction that the passage of a law constitutes a case of rational selection. There are many people, for instance, who, when they encounter superior strength in a man (or a group), wish at once to get a majority somehow and pass a law making it his ethical duty to lay aside his superior strength and to do what he does not want to do, but what they want him to do. The strength may be driven to other outlets, but it will remain. Some tasks are hopeless from the start: the "dry task," according to General Andrews; and he points out some defects in an instrumentality that needed to be as perfect as possible, in view of the task before it, the inconsistency, for instance, in the legalization of the sale of sacramental wine.¹

PRIMARY AND SECONDARY MORES

Some of the mores are evidently more susceptible to test than are others; more than that, certain classes of mores admit more readily than others of the entrance of the rational element. Mores can be classified as follows: (I) Maintenance-mores; (II) Perpetuation-

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 28, 1925).

mores; (III) Gratification-mores. The maintenance-mores, ways by which society maintains its existence, may be (a) adjustments to the physical environment; (b) adjustments to the social environment (fellow-men); (c) adjustments to the spiritual or imaginary environment. The first are industrial; the second, regulative; the third, religious. To acquire and then to hold the products of industry (food and all the rest), and to keep from being killed, obviously constitute maintenance in its essentials; when in this book we speak of the "maintenance-mores," it is the ways of securing such essentials that are at the center of the subject. The industrial mores include the "arts of life" (hunting, herding, agriculture, commerce, war for plunder or defense), labor-organization, capital, and property-systems. The regulative mores cover all the arms of government, with rights, law, and justice. The religious mores comprise theory and practice having to do with the supernatural: worship, sacrifice, fetishism, the taboo, magic, and so on. The perpetuation-mores are those of marriage and the family; while the gratification-mores represent adjustment in satisfaction, over and above mere maintenance, of the senses and of vanity: luxury, the fine arts, ostentation, prestige. All of these categories not only run down into minute detail but also merge into one another. They are not separated by sharply marked boundaries but are broad types roughly delimited by zones of transition.

Of the mores thus distinguished, those are least derived (and may be called "primary") which have to do with the struggle for existence against nature

and fellow-man — with keeping alive and then improving vital resources. Industry — especially of the extractive type, like tillage — and war to plunder and to defend means of livelihood certainly deserve to be called “primary” activities, as distinguished from what may be called the “secondary” mores: those of property-holding, government, religion, marriage, and gratification. Recalling now the cases cited, one realizes that mores which admit of verification are wont to fall, almost exclusively, within the range of this primary class. Here is where, if anywhere, the rational element may enter.

Peoples disapprove of each other's religious habits, forms of marriage and of the family, and amusements, largely because these are not customary in the group that chances to be passing judgment. Such condemnation, being ethnocentric, is seldom the result of rational processes. And for corresponding reasons people approve and cling stubbornly to their own secondary mores, deeply resenting criticism of them. A number of societal adjustments of this order are practically never submitted to verification by the great majority of people, but belong to “second-nature,” changing automatically if at all. When, however, one people confronts the maintenance-mores, or economic organization, of another, it usually has facts to cite for its disapproval or may even be led to approve and adopt. There is here less of unconscious or unreasoning repugnance and prejudice. Advice is sought and taken and the prestige of superior knowledge is conceded.

Compare the case as respects politics: there every man's opinion is equally good; the vote of the ignorant

counts as much as that of the wise. "A statesman can be a humbug; a skipper cannot" — unless he is the captain of a ship of state. The trouble in politics is that there is no immediate, conclusive verification; anyone can range about over the field unchecked by tests; it is like philosophy. People recognize verification in natural science matters. The editor of a leading quarterly reports that he can print almost any article on science, without offense, but that it is not so where politics may be thought to enter. Everyone thinks he has a right to a political opinion, where he would not venture to assert himself in the presence of a chemist. In a real science, the right to an opinion is conceded only to knowledge, repeatedly verified. Why is political discussion forbidden in certain clubs? Because it results in a clash of feeling rather than of cold intellect, and can run to any height of passion without nearing a decisive test on fact. Will it ever come about that forms of government can be tested out like ballistics?

VERIFICATION OF THE MAINTENANCE-MORES

It is in the range of the primary mores that testing and verification are most direct and inevitable. Conceivably society could live on for a long time under almost any religion or marriage-system, without seeing it subjected to visible and conclusive test. This is not so as regards primary maintenance. If the mores lead to such ill success in the struggle for existence that the group in question is destitute, or is weakened in numbers or vitality, annihilation or subjugation is at hand. And when man has developed the power of criticism

of his own collective course, there is nothing that provokes him to distrust of that course more speedily than economic distress. It is upon this criterion that ministries rise and fall and policies are adopted or rejected.

It is in this field that the inadequacy of means to effect ends is most easily perceived, because the relation between means and ends is an immediate, concrete, and striking one. Hence it is here that test and verification are most at home. It is only on a primitive stage that the retention of old maintenance-mores is allowed to check advance in the struggle for existence or the pursuit of a higher standard of living, so that, for example, trees must be felled in the old and holy way, with a shell axe rather than with one of steel. Only under societal isolation can such a taboo persist. Adherence to such mores becomes, even to the less developed intelligence, inexpedient; for it is plainly contrary to the most concrete and unmistakable of interests. You can persuade a savage of the inadequacy of his agricultural practice long before he can be made to see, if ever, that his family-system is capable of being superseded by one yielding better satisfaction to his interests.

Intelligence can be educated to go even farther in its selective influence on the mores that secure societal self-maintenance, and to reach out to the unknown-better rather than simply to discard the known-worse. Instead of taking form in blundering, unconscious effort after relief, man's mental reaction may advance to deliberate experimentation in the conscious effort to get something better. Here is where we have encountered invention, which is the purposeful search

for the better method of procedure through the controlled development and comparison of variations.¹ Invention is the point in the whole process of societal evolution where rationality is most marked; but it has never been widely effective except in the range of the primary activities. In fact it has been confined largely and has become recognizedly successful and cumulative only in the development of the mechanical aids to the prosecution of the struggle for existence. No one thinks of genuine invention, though random happy thoughts have been so designated, in connection with the organization of the family or of the secondary institutions in general. Any observer can perceive that in these ranges the mores move on in much the same sort of way that they have always gone. The more we know, the more we distrust paper constitutions² and utopias, and the more commonly do we refer change to the elemental movements of the mores — though many would not use the term “mores,” but rather “race-character,” “public opinion,” “national spirit,” “Zeitgeist,” “Völkerpsychologie,” and so on.

If the best informed and educated of men are likely to reach the conclusion that in the more complicated issues of societal evolution it is just as well, and probably inevitable, to “trust nature,” it is because they are better aware, as compared with those who wish to tinker and meddle, of all the complexities and difficulties attendant upon an attempt at scientific selection. An eminent physician,³ for example, has

¹ Cf. p. 71, above.

² “The New Mexican Constitution,” in the *Nation*, CIV, 571 (N. Y., May 10, 1917).

³ See pp. 277–278, below.

said of the eugenics program that he was not sure but that nature, in her blind way, could settle the issues surrounding human mating better than the human mind, through the taking of thought, could do it.

In a thoughtful article, entitled "The Guide of Reason,"¹ appears the following: "One cannot but be aroused when one hears, as I did the other day, a thoughtful and influential professor of law saying, 'As the result of mature deliberation, I have come to believe that instinct is a safer guide to conduct than reason.' " The speaker later amended, as he disliked the word "instinct," as follows: "As the result of my mature deliberation I have come to believe that reason is the least trustworthy guide to conduct; or, better still, the least trustworthy guide in matters of conduct is *conscious reasoning*." This is a position familiar enough to the reader of this book. "But," comments the writer of the article, "why are we disconcerted when we find rationally guided conduct ineffective? Surely it is because we have come to believe that action after deliberation ought to be effective. We expect it to be effective, and are disappointed. And how does it happen that we have come to hold that action after deliberation ought to be effective? Surely no such expectation could be entertained unless it were based upon actual experience that tells in its favor; unless, in other words, it were true that rationally guided action appeals to us as on the whole effective rather than ineffective." The interpretation here put upon this matter is that we have attained our conviction as to the effectiveness of "rational deliberation" — say, in such a matter as law — by a process of "reasoning from analogy." For ages, men were engrossed in self-maintenance, where rationality is subject to speedy and conclusive test. In that range, it regularly demonstrated its survival-value. Then it was extended into other ranges where there is no check-up, the assumption being carried over that it was infallible. Sometimes it verified, in the outcome; often it did not. This produced not only disappointment, but a tendency toward self-justification through interpretation and alibis. If there is ever developed a science of society based upon an amount of positive

¹ Marshall, H. R., in the *Nation*, CIV, 572-573 (N. Y., May 10, 1917).

knowledge comparable with that available in respect to physical phenomena, there will be fewer disappointments and attempted reconciliations.

Many harbor a distrust or despair of enlightened selection, derived from profound realization of the difficulties and unforeseen complications involved. It will be noted, however, that distrust does not appear in cases where it is proposed to apply scientific programs in connection with advance in the arts of life; to secure, let us say, a better means of transportation, a more satisfactory standard of value, or an extension of markets. Here we plan confidently enough; but it is only the shallow and half-educated who, when it comes to the more derived and less knowable and verifiable societal processes, do not hesitate to evolve "programs."

They can see the "absolute" in morality as well as in beauty, and will champion, on occasion, "grand principles" that conflict; at various times they will exhort: Sacrifice yourself for others; Do good to your enemies; Do as you would be done by; Do as you are done by; Use others all you can — or: Honesty, whether or no; Honesty is the best policy; Honesty is imbecile.

Discernment stands aghast, as before a tangled skein, and hesitates to take hold of it, well aware that the multiplicity of causes behind societal phenomena, and the consequent impossibility of foreseeing effects, are likely to vitiate any rational procedure possible to the human mind as yet evolved. It realizes the precarious course that lies, in social action, between motives and consequences,¹ where deflection is the rule, and where

¹ Sumner, W. G., *Collected Essays*, II ("Earth Hunger and Other Essays"), p. 67 ff.

it would seem almost the part of omniscience to calculate times, places, and forces of impact.

The attitude of the scientifically discerning toward the rational element is about on this order: up to a certain point, where clean-cut verification stops, they go forward confidently with their projects of elimination and substitution. Beyond that, they have their programs in which they believe, but always with reservations; and with these programs, since passivity is impossible, they must go ahead on what verified knowledge they have, meeting issues as they arise, expecting no instant results, and in the last analysis throwing themselves on the element of chance — that element of the unreckonable and unpredictable which surrounds on all sides the small sphere of knowledge that man's mental powers and limited energy are able to encompass. The place where this element enters is the outermost limit for the entrance of knowledge, and beyond it prevails selection in its automatic, unconscious, and most elemental form, alone.

Most "social problems" are questions of individual, family, and local interest and policy, or are as much beyond settlement by forensic discussion as are meteorological disturbances.

Let us return to the distinction we have tried to make between phases of societal life where selection in the light of verifiable knowledge between variations in the mores is comparatively easy and those where, on the present stage, at least, of development of the social sciences, it is difficult or impossible. The circle-squarer or the apostle of perpetual motion is a pathological phenomenon where a crank of the same species, with a

novel religious, artistic, or political idea, happy but preposterous, may attain a considerable following. In general, only where the exact or scientific method can be applied is the rational element present in selection. This is chiefly, if not entirely, as things now are, in that part of societal activity where men have to do with actual, concrete, natural objects rather than with each other or with some higher power whose existence cannot be scientifically proved — that is, where they react upon natural environment in the effort to preserve life, or to preserve it more satisfactorily.

THE MAINTENANCE-MORES ARE BASIC

There is a second outstanding fact about the mores that bears vitally upon the effectiveness of the rational element on selection.

All other mores and institutions are further secondary to those of maintenance in that their types are to a large degree functions of the type of maintenance. The hunting tribe becomes, after a time, pastoral in its type of self-maintenance; then with this change go alterations in its secondary societal forms, so that at length there is presented a set of mores, typical all along the line, which are referred to as the distinguishing characters of the pastoral status. A pastoral tribe becomes agricultural and sedentary, and presently characteristics in its secondary societal forms, attendant on a tillage economy, appear. An analogy is the case of a person acting "just as one would expect" from a knowledge of his circumstances, exhibiting habits typical of those circumstances. This is what is meant by the phrase "strain toward consistency," used of

the mores. Unquestionably the secondary societal forms come to harmonize with each other, as well as with the primary, so that there are mutual adjustments between them which are independent of their common dependence upon the form taken by the maintenance-mores. Marriage mores and property mores march together; religion may have a direct effect on trade, as when it prohibits alcoholic stimulants; nevertheless, it is the mores arising out of direct reactions between the society and its physical environment that form the independent variable, of which such mutually influencing pairs are functions. The ultimate activity of society is to preserve (feed, clothe, shelter, and protect) itself, and so the mores and institutions that contribute to this end are fundamental. It is upon these forms as a basis that the rest of the societal structure is erected; and the shape of the superstructure cannot vary except in detail from the type conditioned by the character of the foundation.

There are those who will agree that the facts and conditions of the economic order are the basic ones, as applying to primitive life, but who would reject that view as untrue of conditions under a higher culture, just as they concede the importance of the influences of natural environment on the savage, but deny it in the case of civilized man. That conviction is not challenged here except as it is defied by the general tenor and upshot of the whole presentation. The first and fullest of the following illustrations are taken from outside the field of ethnography or the history of primitive peoples. The proportion of men to land, which is that of mouths to food, determines the type of maintenance-activi-

ties. Let us note, first, the resultant influence upon the general code of society.

"In general, then, when the men are too numerous for the means of subsistence, the struggle for existence is fierce. The finer sentiments decline; selfishness comes out again from the repression under which culture binds it; the social tie is loosened; all the dark sufferings of which humanity is capable become familiar phenomena. Men are habituated to see distorted bodies, harsh and frightful diseases, famine and pestilence; they find out what depths of debasement humanity is capable of. Hideous crimes are perpetrated; monstrous superstitions are embraced even by the most cultivated members of society; vices otherwise inconceivable become common, and fester in the mass of society; culture is lost; education dies out; the arts and sciences decline. All this follows for the most simple and obvious of all reasons: because a man whose whole soul is absorbed in a struggle to get enough to eat will give up his manners, his morals, his education, or that of his children, and will thus, step by step, withdraw from and surrender everything else in order simply to maintain existence. Indeed, it is a fact of familiar knowledge that, under the stress of misery, all the finer acquisitions and sentiments slowly but steadily perish.

"The converse of this statement, however, is true. . . . If the subsistence of men is in excess of the number of men, all the opposite results are produced, for in that case the demand is in excess of the supply."¹

Since the ideas about societal evolution, here presented, have developed about Sumner's exposition of the folkways, and since he was always working toward his views for years before they took definite shape in his mind, it is particularly appropriate to begin with him. His generalizations, as quoted,² are made for the most part around surveys of American conditions resting upon a very large collection of materials.

¹ Sumner, *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 120-121.

² Sumner, *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 29, 30, 51-52, 26-27, 304, 337-339. These are characteristic extracts. The same point of view appears again and again throughout his writings.

"We are told that moral forces alone can elevate any such people again [as the Irish were several decades ago]. But it is plain that a people which has sunk below the reach of the economic forces of self-interest has certainly sunk below the reach of moral forces, and that this objection is superficial and short-sighted. What is true is that economic forces always go before moral forces. Men feel self-interest long before they feel prudence, self-control, and temperance. They lose the moral forces long before they lose the economic forces. If they can be regenerated at all, it must be first by distress appealing to self-interest and forcing recourse to some expedient for relief. Emigration is certainly an economic force for the relief of Irish distress. It is a palliative only, when considered in itself, but the virtue of it is that it gives the non-emigrating population a chance to rise to a level on which the moral forces can act upon them."

"The economic forces work with moral forces and are their handmaidens, but the economic forces are far more primitive, original, and universal. The glib generalities . . . which we sometimes hear . . . as if you could set moral and economic forces separate from and in antithesis to each other, and discard the one to accept and work by the other, gravely misconstrue the realities of the social order."

"The sound student of sociology can hold out to mankind, as individuals or as a race, only one hope of better and happier living. That hope lies in an enhancement of the industrial virtues and of the moral forces which thence arise. Industry, self-denial, and temperance are the laws of prosperity for men and states; without them advance in the arts and in wealth means only corruption and decay through luxury and vice. With them progress in the arts and increasing wealth are the prime conditions of an advancing civilization which is sound enough to endure. The power of the human race to-day over the conditions of prosperous and happy living is sufficient to banish poverty and misery if it were not for folly and vice. The earth does not begin to be populated up to its power to support population on the present stage of the arts; if the United States were as densely populated as the British Islands, we should have 1,000,000,000 people here. If, therefore, men were willing to set to work with energy and courage to subdue the outlying parts of the earth, all might live in plenty and prosperity. But if they insist on remaining in the slums of great cities or on the borders of an old

society, and on a comparatively exhausted soil, there is no device of economist or statesman which can prevent them from falling victims to poverty and misery or from succumbing in the competition of life to those who have greater command of capital. The socialist or philanthropist who nourishes them in their situation and saves them from the distress of it is only cultivating the distress which he pretends to cure."

Concerning the influence of capital: "It is impossible that the man with capital and the man without capital should be equal. To affirm that they are equal would be to say that a man who has no tool can get as much food out of the ground as the man who has a spade or a plough; or that the man who has no weapon can defend himself as well against hostile beasts or hostile men as the man who has a weapon. If that were so, none of us would work any more. We work and deny ourselves to get capital just because, other things being equal, the man who has it is superior, for attaining all the ends of life, to the man who has it not. Considering the eagerness with which we all seek capital and the estimate we put upon it, either in cherishing it if we have it, or envying others who have it while we have it not, it is very strange what platitudes pass current about it in our society so soon as we begin to generalize about it. If our young people really believed some of the teachings they hear, it would not be amiss to preach them a sermon once in a while to reassure them, setting forth that it is not wicked to be rich, nay even, that it is not wicked to be richer than your neighbor."

Concerning democracy in the American Colonies, the following: "No convention ever decreed it or chose it. It existed in the sense of social equality long before it was recognized and employed as a guiding principle in institutions and laws; its strength in the latter is due to the fact that it is rooted and grounded in economic facts. The current popular notion that we have democratic institutions because the men of the eighteenth century were wise enough to choose and create them is entirely erroneous. We have not made America; America has made us. There is, indeed, a constant reaction between the environment and the ideas of the people; the ideas turn into dogmas and pet notions, which in their turn are applied to the environment. What effect they have, however, except to produce confusion, error, mischief, and loss is a very serious ques-

tion. The current of our age has been entirely in favor of the notion that a convention to amend the Constitution can make any kind of state or society which we may choose as an ideal. That is a great delusion, but it is one of the leading social faiths of the present time."

Concerning the basic nature of the economic order: "The current opinion amongst us undoubtedly is that the extension of the suffrage and the virtual transfer of the powers of government to the uneducated and non-property classes, compelling the educated and property classes, if they want to influence the government, to do so by persuading or perhaps corrupting the former, is a piece of political wisdom to which our fathers were led by philosophy and by the conviction that the doctrine of it was true and just. There were causes for it, however, which were far more powerful than preaching, argument, and philosophy; and besides, if you will notice how hopeless it is by any argument to make headway against any current of belief which has obtained momentum in a society, you will put your faith in the current of belief and not in the power of logic or exhortation. You will then look at the causes of the current of belief, and you will find them in the economic conditions which are controlling, at the time, the struggle for existence and the competition of life. At the beginning of this century it would have been just exactly as impossible to put aristocratic restrictions on democracy here as it would have been at the same time to put democratic restrictions on aristocracy in England. Now the economic circumstances of our century which have modified the struggle for existence and the competition of life have been, first, the opening of a vast extent of new land to the use and advantage of the people who had no social power of any kind; and, second, the advance in the arts. Of the arts, those of transportation have been the most important because they have made the new land accessible; but all the other applications of the arts have been increasing man's power in the struggle for existence, and they have been most in favor of the classes which otherwise had nothing but their hands with which to carry on that struggle. This has lessened the advantage of owning land, and it has lessened the comparative advantage of having capital over that of having only labor. An education has not now as great value to give its possessor a special advantage —

a share, that is, in a limited monopoly — as it had a century ago. This is true in a still greater degree of higher education, until we come up to those cases where exceptional talent, armed with the highest training, once more wins the advantages of a natural monopoly.

“Hence it is that the great economic changes I have mentioned have produced the greatest social revolution that has ever occurred. It has raised the masses to power, has set slaves free, has given a charter of social and political power to the people who have nothing, and has forced those-who-have to get power, if they want it, by persuading and influencing those-who-have-not. All the demagogues, philosophers, and principle-brokers are trying to lead the triumphal procession and crying: ‘We got it for you.’ ‘We are your friends.’ ‘It is to us that you owe it all.’ On the other hand the same social revolution has undermined all social institutions and prescriptions of an aristocratic character, and they are rapidly crumbling away, even in the Old World, under the reaction from the New.”

Viewed from the standpoint of what is taken to be “progress,” it would seem sometimes that advance in the maintenance-mores has involved retrogression of the other mores. For example, the introduction of the factory-system seemed to throw the whole organization of society into disorder and chaos and to jar the secondary societal forms (property, government, the family) out of adjustment. Similar cases appear all through the last two centuries of rapid increase of economic power. But this phenomenon means no more than the lapse of harmony between the traditional secondary societal forms and the altered primary ones. An access of pain and want, the unmistakable sign of maladaptation, promptly ensued and forced the secondary forms toward adjustment with the primary. The former have to catch up, so to speak, with the latter.

When certain of the mores are out of harmony with

others, there ensues a process of accommodation,¹ whereby those which lag are brought up at least ostensibly, into rank. This is commonly done by "explaining" or "interpreting" or, as we should put it, rationalizing them in such manner as to show that they were not lagging at all but had not been "rightly" understood. Accommodation of this order is particularly marked in the efforts to bring accepted religion into line with changed aspects of the other mores.

There is one other aspect of society's life — of its maintenance through time — that needs brief attention; and that is its self-perpetuation. For a society is a long-lived thing — some would say an immortal one; and, in a sense, its maintenance involves the succession of generations. It may occur, then, that the perpetuation-mores seem to govern those of maintenance. What we have here is really a case of temporary as against long-time interest; infanticide was a current form of societal self-maintenance which temporarily relieved the local situation; if, however, this mode of saving that situation had become lasting and prevalent, the race would have disappeared, strangled, as it were, in the cradle.² Scrutiny of such cases reveals the widest aspect of the maintenance-idea.

The foregoing are rather broad and abstract generalizations. Let us, for the time, focus attention upon novelties in the maintenance-organization — inventions, new elements introduced from without — and note how they drew in their train consequences in the secondary mores. As a sort of tone-setting incident, the following is characteristic; it shows where the pinch of life lies with the

¹ Lippert, *Kulturgeschichte*, I, 80. He develops what he calls a "*Gesetz der Kompatibilität*," law of compatibility, or law of accommodation.

² Lippert, *Kulturgeschichte*, I, 77.

primitives, and the state of passive relief in its absence.¹ "Peary once turned to one of his Eskimo hunters who sat pensively outside the skin tupik [tent] on a brilliant Arctic summer day and said: 'Of what are you thinking, Tauchingwaq?' The brown native shrugged and smiled. 'I do not have to think, Pearyaksuak [Great Peary]. I have plenty of meat.'"

The discovery of the use of fire was probably the most generally influential upon the course of civilization of all the "inventions" of the race. The utilization of this element is essential to most, if not all, of the industries of mankind. Its presence was a factor making for the unity of family life. "Fire" became the term for family, clan, and nation: a joint family consisted of separate "fires"; the Thirteen Colonies were known by the Indians as "The Thirteen Fires." Political negotiations were carried on before the fire and with much pipe-smoking. Fire, being regarded as a spirit, entered into the cult, with burnt offerings, exorcism of evil spirits, and cremation of the body, and eventually became an object of worship. It allowed men to inhabit cooler regions, in which alone higher civilization has developed. Without fire, the whole of human evolution, and not alone the material part, could not have been what it was.

The art of writing enabled mankind to store knowledge otherwise transmissible only by word of mouth. A small exercise of imagination will reveal to anyone how its influence has permeated the whole societal structure. Without it we could not still be trying to model our mores upon antiquated models and injunctions, to rest upon the authority of men long dead to whom the problems we now face would be even more bewildering than to us; nor could we have profited by their occasional apt injunctions. One needs only to reflect upon the authority of the literature of the ancients, and our often obsequious deference to it, to realize what effects its transmission has accomplished.

The invention of the compass had a profound effect upon discovery, as well as upon marine industries; and in the new worlds there has developed a novel type of culture which has exerted much influence upon the mores of the older countries. The compass was

¹ Green, F., "Eskimos are still living in the Stone Age," in *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 10, 1926).

certainly instrumental in ushering in the Discoveries Period, and any history of modern times is replete with accounts of radical changes in the mores consequent upon the economic and other developments of that era. Improvements in sailing-craft also have contributed to all these results.

The invention of gunpowder was one of the factors that eliminated the feudal system in Europe. Before the employment of firearms, as someone has said, the mailed knight lorded it over the churl, seized his property, often disposed of his wife and daughters, and raced over his plowed land, "trampling his children into the rich mold"; and the peasant could do nothing. In fact, the knights could not kill one another very consistently, as the mortality of mediæval battles shows; an antagonist could be unhorsed and laid on his back, like a turtle, but it almost required a smith to open him up for operations. However, after firearms were introduced, says our sprightly commentator, "any clodhopper could drill a hole in the lordliest knight" — something that made strongly for equality.

Trade also played its part in disposing of the feudal system, and to record its many other and various influences upon the social organization, not only of nations, but of the race, would take volumes. No one of these could well have been predicted. Trade seems even to have had an enlivening effect upon tribal disposition, as in the case of a certain African people, of whom it is written:¹ "As in the case of all trading peoples, the disposition of the Wasumbwa is bright and volatile, and the power of comprehension very highly developed. In association with this exists an evident capacity for adaptation to foreign customs and usages." A noted specialist² on Homer refers the Trojan War to trade rivalries and contends that the list of Trojan allies has a trade-route basis. Mathematicians, as has been seen, show how the schools took over the Hindu-Arabic numerals from the traders.³ And clear on the other side of the world, in Jackson's time, we find the development of transportation allowing of a convention of commoner people, as against the intellectuals of an earlier period, which contributed

¹ Von Götzen, *Durch Afrika von Ost nach West*, p. 82

² Leaf, W., *Troy, a Study in Homeric Geography*.

³ Smith and Karpinski, *Hindu-Arabic Numerals*, p. 136.

powerfully to the development of the characteristic American party-system.

The British empire has always been "squared with the facts." "It is because the British empire has not for at least 150 years been cursed with a doctrinaire spirit, but has always been ready to fit itself to a shifting environment, that it has endured and bids fair to continue unshaken in its foundations. There are no hard and fast rules about it. That is one reason why it emerges from crisis after crisis stronger than ever." This is what has been called "muddling through" by those who admire "grand principles."¹

Continuing, for a moment, with modern inventions such as the automobile, airplane, wireless, and radio, consider the needful adjustments in and the additions to law which automobile traffic has brought about and which the proper guarantee of rights as against damage done from on high is demanding. Some time ago, an eminent lawyer, being asked upon what grounds one could recover, in case a flier fell headfirst down his chimney and was dug out alive, at considerable expense and trouble, replied that the only recourse, under the law of the time, was a suit for trespass. If irresponsibles are allowed to fly as they please, in planes purchased from department stores, there will be no more peace for a worried person. In fact, peace seems to be on the way to extinction. Even a long sea-voyage, unless it is made in a skiff, no longer insulates a man from his business interests.

It will never be forgotten by one who has studied history in college that the invention of machines brought about the time-honored Industrial Revolution. Every invention that has made maintenance easier has drawn after it a long string of consequences throughout the societal structure — not all good, not all bad, but mixed.

An eminent economist,² speaking of certain types of settlement, says: "I think that every attempt to explain the types of settlement not by the need of defense and through economic circumstances, but through psychic characteristics of the nation, must finally be given up." Let us take an illustration out of the life of a people, the American Indians, whose mores have undergone recognizably great

¹ "Squaring the Empire with the Facts," in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 22, 1926).

² Kowalewski, *Oekonomische Entwicklung Europas*, I, 72.

change. The speediest way in which this result has been brought about, whether for the good or ill of the people concerned, has been by a marked alteration of the natural environment. The settlers in this country, in pursuit of their own interests, effected such a change in the environment of the aborigines. They cut down his trees, killed or drove off his game, and otherwise rendered the Indian adjustment in the range of maintenance no longer adequate. Progressively this process went forward, until the whole societal system of the Indians broke down and they retrograded in their mores all along the line. The introduction of fire-water assisted much in this collapse.¹

An instructive corollary of the contact of Indian and white men was the introduction of the horse, which altered the whole mode of the organization for maintenance among the tribes of the Plains; they deserted what agriculture they knew and became an inveterate hunting-people. And with this selection in the industrial range went changes in all the other ranges. Their medicine-men had to become horse-doctors, too, making magic to keep the mounts well and lend them speed. The medicine-men might not kill a horse; but they put the foot-prints of enemies' horses in gopher-holes, in order to lame them.² Again, much wandering led to the development of an astonishingly full and efficient sign-language. Such a development is wont to flourish where wide plains permit of extensive wanderings, and where there are many tribes speaking mutually unintelligible languages. Indians from some small village in Arkansas were now to be encountered in Mexico and, again, over the Canadian border. This is a striking illustration of the inevitable alteration and harmonization of other social practices with those of maintenance. All the mores focus upon the art of getting a living as the primordial societal activity and the less vital of them conform to the more vital. A modern parallel to the development of the sign-language is the familiar stress toward a world-language exerted by the radio;³ here, too, peoples of many tongues are brought into contact. The telegraph resulted in the Morse Code, as a sort of

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Contact."

² Grinnell, G. B., *Cheyenne Indians*, II, 130, 139, 140, 143.

³ Goldsmith, A. N., reported in *N. Y. Times* (May 20, 1930); "Hello, Timbuktu!" in *The Independent* (Jan. 29, 1927).

common medium, but the radio demands a common understanding of universally intelligible sounds.

"The Egyptians owed their power and civilization to the fact that the Nile mud so enriched the valley every season that one man's labor could produce subsistence for many. When the population increased, the power of social maintenance was not diminished but increased. When there was a great population there, using the land with very painstaking labor according to the stage of the arts, an immense surplus was produced which raised war, statescraft, fine arts, science, and religion up to a very high plane. Then they tried to satisfy the demand for men by slaves, that is, persons who contributed to the social power to their utmost, yet shared in it only under the narrowest limitations. The system, after reaching the full flower of prosperity of which it was capable, became rigid, chiefly, as it appears, because the sanction of religion was given to the traditional and stereotyped forms. Also the power of social support which lay in the fertility of the soil had been exploited to its utmost. The arts by which more product might have been won advanced only very slowly — scarcely at all. There was hardly any emigration to new land. Hence a culmination was reached, after which there must be decline and decay. The achievements of the Egyptians were made in the period when they were growing up to the measure of the chances which they possessed."¹

The following cases of societies asserted to have been shaped by arbitrary devices illustrate the determining effects of environment, with the consequent persistence of race-characteristics and other deep-lying responses to environment. The effect is as of an attempt to ignore the terms of the struggle for existence, as imposed by life-conditions. The constitution of Sparta appears arbitrary; but it could not have been superposed upon the society if there had not been some anterior situation favorable to it or some deep-rooted interest (militarism) which it was expected to serve — one so eagerly approved that anything could be endured to attain its satisfaction. Contemporaries wondered at the Spartan system, admiring though they despaired of imitating. Later generations of Spartans felt that they had lost it and tried to return to it. To the modern stu-

¹ Sumner, W. G., *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 146-147.

dent it seems to have become bankrupt through the treachery of its own ideas and institutions. Another case is that of Russia, which is the enigma of our time. Peter I and Catherine II made it what it externally became, while the old Russian nationality, which had great individuality, still remained in it. It ought to have been a democracy, for its village institutions were democratic, but it had no unity except through its central power, and that made it a military empire whose extension was out of proportion to its internal economic strength. For two centuries its history fluctuated between the policy of Peter the Great and return to the integrity of its ancient constitution and mores.

There are always definite limits to arbitrary enactment. It was quite impossible for the men who wrote the Constitution of the United States to make the term of the Presidency ten or twenty-five years. Interesting speculations might be ventured as to the differences which could have been produced in American political history as the consequences of what did not and could not happen. If they could have done this, it might constitute a case of determining history by arbitrary device; but the Constitution-makers could not have arrived at such a provision. Their ideas and prejudices were strained to the utmost by what they did do to make the President an independent functionary. This was an issue that enlisted feeling and interest, against monarchy and the European system; in the case of minor and indifferent devices, such as the electoral college, not much excitement could or can be roused.¹ It is an "academic" question.

The *Times*,² editorially, criticizes those who consider the "will to peace as purely psychological." This would be to misread "the forces that have been at work for the rehabilitation of the Continent." Time has been a curative factor, "but it has largely produced its effects by healing the stricken bodies of the war nations. . . . Before the *mens sana* could assert itself fully there had to be, comparatively, a *corpus sanum*." This does not refer solely to the physical bodies of the crippled; it refers to the body of society. "If the belligerent nations have groped their way to reconciliation with painful slowness, it has been largely because their energies

¹ "The Electoral College," letter dated Dec. 22, 1922, in *N. Y. Times*.

² *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 25, 1925).

and nerves were busy with tasks at home." How largely these tasks were of an economic nature needs no pointing out. "As the economic life approached stability men's minds grew more stable." The conditions of sex-disproportion and the entrance of women into industry, resultant from the war, which contributed to the alteration of women's political status, have been mentioned in another connection.

Evidence of a more general nature, showing the basic character of the maintenance-organization, may be gathered from widely accepted generalizations of the science of society. Spencer¹ has covered this matter in one of its broadest aspects in his classic comparison of the militant and industrial types of society. Militarism and industrialism are names for two major categories of human effort by which societies are self-maintained. But the character of all the institutions of a society is determined according to which of these two prevails. This is a contention to which Spencer often recurs, and with a wealth of illustration.

In the history of civilization there occur a number of correlations, where institutions show consistency with one another, and where the pace is set by the maintenance-mores. Thus, an advance to an agricultural economy is prerequisite to the development of private property in land, conquest, slavery, classes, and the state.² Slavery results also from the debt-relation. The nature of governmental institutions, as foregoing quotations have indicated, is correlative with the local type of industrial organization. The term "plutoc-

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, II, chs. XVII, XVIII.

² Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Correlations," "Debt-relation," "Plutocracy," etc.

racy," which is what "aristocracy" often means, is significant of the influence of wealth upon the regulative system. Class distinctions and the code built around them result from inequalities imposed under slavery or the competitive system, the very essence of which is the inequality of material possessions. Even international relations are based ultimately upon conditions involving maintenance-interests. A noted student of such relations ¹ has stated, for example, that it is normal for a great war to start suddenly. If there is time for deliberation, the commercial and financial interests have an opportunity to assert themselves and to endeavor to secure some form of peaceful adaptation. They will assert themselves later on, in any case, and the final settlement must include the satisfaction of the basic economic interests of dominant groups. Here is a forecast which we have seen verified. With the fading out of emotion, the competition of interests can again become a peaceful one.

The patriarchal family is natural to the pastoral stage; consider the "patriarchs" of the Bible. Polygamy accompanies prosperity and wealth, as they accrue from an advance in the maintenance-organization; while polyandry is a rare adjustment to extreme poverty. In England, during the late war, a variation toward polygamy was considered, in theory, by which wealthy men might use some of their affluence in providing for women whose chances of getting husbands to support them were lessened as the result of war-mortality. In all societal change, woman has had to

¹ Coolidge, A. C., address delivered Oct. 8, 1914, reported by Associated Press.

conform, and in every case the notion of what was wanted in a wife, and what rights she was to have, has changed. We might roughly schematize as follows: the local forms of social intercourse between the sexes depend upon the local ideas of decency, chastity, etc.; these upon the form of the marriage relation; this upon property considerations; these upon economic conditions, including the form of sex-division of labor in the industrial organization; these upon the type of the struggle for existence (militant or industrial; hunting, herding, or agricultural); this upon conditions of the environment and of sex-difference, as they exist in nature.

Two institutions of society which are closely conjoined and correlated all through history are marriage and property.¹ The position of woman, in matrimony or out of it, varies with the status of the wife; and within the institution her status is generally felt to depend upon no more than a transitory sentiment unless it is steadied or rendered stable by a property guarantee. A real marriage should be founded upon permanent, positive interests; hence the passage of property, in the form of bride-price or dowry, which distinguishes the taking of a wife of status as contrasted with the unceremonious and unguaranteed appropriation of a mere consort. This might be illustrated copiously, but a single case may serve to carry the point.

In Sumatra, where the bride-price is customary, the importance of material interests is so well recognized, that the goods paid are often overvalued in order to bring the nominal price up to the de-

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Marriage," "Property," "Correlations."

mands of the *adat* (mores). Inability to pay changes the type of the marriage; it is then by abduction. In these regions there exist side by side the marriage with bride-price and that without bride-price, called "adoption." In each case the whole congeries of duties, rights, inheritance-customs, divorce-settlements, etc., vary according to the manner in which property has passed or has not passed. In South Sumatra the Dutch government tried to do away with the bride-price; in 1862 it was formally put under penalty. The result is that the word for such a marriage (*jujur*) is no longer used; but the custom has been rechristened and remains. The prohibitions have, in some cases, however, coincided with the natural change (coming with a developed material civilization) toward the "parental" form (parents on an equality in rights, power to bequeath, etc.), and have thus hastened it somewhat.¹ This citation is typical of the dependence of the mores of societal self-perpetuation upon those of maintenance.

The more closely primitive marriage is studied the more clearly does the investigator see that its several forms are reflections of the local economic life, as determined, at bottom, by environmental conditions.

That the prevalence, in Australia, of the primitive form of group-marriage varies with the terms in which the struggle for existence is set is clearly indicated by Howitt:² "The most backward-standing types of social organization, having descent through the mother and an archaic communal marriage, exist in the dry and desert country; the more developed Kamilaroi type, having descent through the mother, but a general absence of the . . . [most primitive] marriage practice, is found in the better watered tracts which are the source of all the great rivers of East Australia; while

¹ Wilken, *Verspreide Geschriften*, II, 223-224; 230-231; 270-271, *et passim*; Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, § 363.

² In *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, XVIII, 33.

the most developed types, having individual marriage, and in which, in almost all cases, descent is counted through the father, are found along the coasts where there is the most permanent supply of water and most food."

Forms of worship and of diversion reflect the environment and the major economic interests of a people. Men in arid regions must have rain, and it must come, scanty as it is, at the right time for the crops. Their religion often seems to center on rain-making. Consider the snake-dance of the Western Indians. Where herders are always talking cattle, and even thinking and dreaming cattle, their religion cannot but be tinged with cow; and when moderns have Christ figured to them as one who would have been a great salesman, booster, or Rotarian,¹ we have a parallel instance. The Eskimos have no terror of a hot hereafter; they are spending all their energies to keep warm; their hell is more like a certain icy part of Dante's. Their spirits are almost wholly evil, corresponding to the plenitude of their perils. Fishermen's gods are fish-like and their visiting-cards are fish. The details of beliefs and of the cult are such that, if we knew nothing else about a people except its religion, we could make a short inference as to their methods of securing a living; in fact, inasmuch as there are so many survivals in religion, we can reconstruct from them a general, and often a specific, idea of the economic past of those who exhibit them. Where, for example, much is made in religious symbolism of the dove or the lamb, we

¹The amusing features of the section "Americana," in the *American Mercury*, should not be allowed to submerge its value as a record of the mores.

can infer preoccupation with domesticated birds and animals. In short, religion shows an economic tinge; its ritual is full of reminiscences of the maintenance-mores and could not be what it is, did it not rest upon them as a basis. Let them change form, and the ritual will eventually alter, no matter how conservative, as ritual, it may be. Ultimately, also, even the dogmas will change, as they are now doing in the modern world.

Many of the gratification-mores are no more than luxury-mores, and these are due to extensions of wants beyond the degree of mere necessity. In time, luxuries, such as wall-coverings, hard-wood floors, telephones, automobiles, come to be regarded as necessities to life, and often are conveniences without which people are uncomfortable in the modern world. Sugar was once a great luxury, and salt has been widely regarded as such. Luxuries are elaborations on necessities, and may become necessities. Amusement and the taste for "the finer things" — the pleasures of art, literature, music, humanitarianism, and so on — supervene upon the antecedent power to provide for mere living. Where a people has to strain each sinew every moment to keep their heads above water, there is little chance of that leisure which is demanded for the cultivation of mere self-gratification. Utopias are insubstantial and are not at home among the maintenance-mores; nevertheless, the very construction of them calls for previous successes in economic adjustment.

Utopian programs do not impress unimaginative and practical men. Such men demand verification, for one thing, and they have a strong sense that the way toward adjustment starts out from maintenance-

considerations. It is astonishingly easy, in these days, to raise huge sums for medical purposes. "The man of the purse strings will change his practice readily enough in the employment of some new mechanical art, but he will change neither his practice nor his opinion for employment of new and undemonstrated theory; and there is no scientific tribunal that can speak to him in such matters imperatively or with finality. The doctors disagree too much among themselves."

"The history of the efforts to relieve famine in Ireland shows plainly that sporadic philanthropy is neither expedient nor successful. The true friends of Ireland are those who conspire to put the Irish themselves in the self-respecting way of relieving their own temporal necessities." An economist¹ speaks of the fundamental economic revolution "which has already gone a long way in the United States and is bound to go much further": "Very few reformers, especially of the professional sort, know that this revolution is going on. Revolutions sometimes come in that way. The world quietly turns over while the professional reformers are barking at the moon. The real things are accomplished not by people who think they are accomplishing great things; they are accomplished by people who do the day's work and do it well, who function efficiently in society and don't know always that they are revolutionizing the world. . . . Ownership of the factories and the plants by the workers themselves is coming more rapidly in this country than it can possibly come in any other country, and it is coming without any reformer knowing that it is coming. He has not had anything to do with it. It is coming because the ordinary economic forces are putting into the hands of the workers the money with which to buy the plant in which they are working." "Legislation can do much, but against the glacial movement of economic forces it is well-nigh powerless."² Said a Rumanian statesman, when asked his views as to the future of civilization: "Judged by the

¹ Carver, T. N., quoted in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 20, 1924).

² "Not Easy to 'Change,'" in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 7, 1920).

light of reason there is but little hope, but I have faith in man's inextinguishable impulse to live."¹

"Intellectual, moral, juridic, and political revolutions which are not based upon a corresponding and anterior economic transformation have no consistence; on the other hand, when they are the natural and methodic continuation of a positive economic revolution — when, in short, they are the adaptation of the idea to the fact, no reaction, save an economic reaction, a physical cataclysm, or a physical degeneracy can prevail against them." The author² cites a number of illustrations.

Theorizing about the secondary mores, after the maintenance-mores have changed, can never bring them back; there must be new secondary forms for the new primary ones. The old college system, for example, is gone for good and all, with its compulsory classics in the original, metaphysics, and all the rest of the antedated studies. Economic advance and science have provided more subjects to study, and the new ones have demonstrated their worthwhile quality.³ The religion of Puritan New England can no more return than the crooked-stick plow, or wampum money, or the stage-coach.

The New York *Nation*⁴ protests against the assumption that great men of the past, in imaginary resurrection, would not only be "in fullest sympathy with the best movements of the present, but that they would have discarded all the errors and defects which clung to them during their actual lives." It is averred that Lincoln would have approved of civil service, though he was actually something of a spoilsman, as all politicians were in his day. This assumption of identity as between the codes of different epochs is, like an analogy, a flimsy, though often seductive, means of appeal

¹ Jonescu, T., quoted in *N. Y. Times* (Sept. 1, 1921).

² DeGreef, G., *Sociologie*, pp. 168, 210.

³ Spencer, H., *Education*, long ago predicted this situation.

⁴ Feb. 19, 1914, p. 177.

to the unreflecting. Its offer or acceptance reveals a lack of "historic sense," or of a sense of the mores in evolution.

A final evidence of the basic nature of maintenance, and one somewhat more recondite, is as follows: In examining certain practices and institutions which, at first sight, seem useless or even harmful, it is often revealed that they discharge a real service to society, as it were unwittingly. They are "retrospectively rational." This unnoticed serviceableness is what gives them their survival-value. Now, this survival-value — a sort of by-product — is found to be, with surprising regularity, of a life-preserving, economic order — which, indeed, ought not to be surprising, when one realizes the importance, in last analysis, of self-preservation through avoidance of peril and the attainment of food and other necessities. As illustration, consider the taboo against killing the totem-animal, which works like a game law; the quarantine on the sick or dead; the periodic cessation of labor on holy-days; the religious prohibition of touching the next year's seed-supply; the manufacture of arrow-poison in secret; the substitution of paper-representations of various forms of wealth, in sacrifice; and so on almost indefinitely. To realize the automatic working of such provisions, one needs to follow up the theories, mainly religious, on which they are based; in so doing, he discovers that there may be in them no plan or purpose to secure the actual adjustment attained, however wise and well-considered they may appear in retrospect; and, as has been noted, he becomes deeply impressed with the fact that their unrecognized serviceableness or survival-value reveals itself as a maintenance-matter.

THE DIFFUSION OF THE RATIONAL ELEMENT

The last chapters of this book will present several additional instances of adjustment, of a more systematic order, in which adaptation will appear as the result of the action of variation, selection, and transmission; there we shall see yet again how the maintenance-mores adjust to typical, contrasted varieties of life-conditions, and how other mores fall into harmony with them. The code of the maintenance-mores is, one might say, the dominant chord, that vibrates to the tone of the struggle with nature and fellow-man; the rest of the mores are, as it were, overtones, which must die away and be succeeded by others as the chord is altered under changed life-conditions of society. Or the maintenance-mores may be regarded as the soil out of which the other mores derive their sustenance and without which they could not be. Let the soil be changed in character and constituents; let it become acid instead of alkaline in reaction; and the crop must change. Let there be a "retrogression" or a leap of "progress" in the maintenance-range, and the organization of society will respond.

The rational element is most effective, then, precisely in that part of the societal organization where its operation is farthest-reaching. Rational alterations in the maintenance-mores cannot but presently entail corresponding alterations in the secondary mores, in the application of rational selection to which there does not exist enough verified knowledge to render procedure remotely scientific. The rational element, however, applied at the point where it can be applied most

readily — where its results are most easily verifiable — is bound to become indirectly effective, in a sure and natural manner, at points less accessible.

The obvious practical suggestion, then, to anyone who wishes to “improve” society, either his own or another, is to try to render the means of maintenance, by judicious interference, better adequate to secure adjustment. Then the improver might crown his Augean labor by turning his attention to helping the secondary mores get into harmony with the improvement he has wrought in the primary ones. This conclusion cannot content the “world-beatifier,” but it may afford a hint to those whose ideals and ambition are less vaulting, and who respect science enough to wish to go a sober furlong with her rather than dance an aimless mile, or even twain, in an emotional ecstasy.

If this is “economic determinism,” so be it. The objection to that theory seems to inhere in its application rather than in its own validity. Marx had a therapeutic plan, based upon his doctrine, for changing the maintenance-mores, a plan of selection from which most men of perception would dissent. Doctrinaire socialists do not study to adjust to verities, but challenge them in utopian fashion. Their assumption that the mores must be changed wholesale gives many a student of society pause. It is possible, however, to believe in the basic nature of the economic life and then, when it comes to planning action, modestly try to help society adapt to the conditions of life as learned; it is not necessary to have in view the radical alteration of the whole social order, rejecting the experience of the race and testily setting out to change human nature and other somewhat permanent elements, rather than accommodate one’s self, even though it is not so easy, speedy, or grandiose, to actual life-conditions. Belief in some of the Marxian positions, together with entire distrust in the plan for their application, does not make

one a socialist or communist, any more than disbelief in the doctrine of absolute state power and control renders one anarchistic, with leanings towards bomb-throwing.

It is necessary to recall the fact that this chapter professes to do no more than examine into the entrance of the rational element. The examination confirms the essentially automatic nature of the selective process as applied to the mores; into certain of them thin filaments of the rational may enter; but that is all. All but a very few human beings confine what rational thinking they do to personal and narrowly local interests, being unable even to visualize larger and wider ones, though they may talk and thob familiarly and valiantly about them. And so societal selection must remain, for any measurable time ahead, impersonal and automatic. Being impersonal, it is not obvious; but the unseen things, we are told, are the eternal ones.

The entrance of the rational element is local, sporadic, interrupted, and indirect. It can gain scope and momentum only along with the development of a science of society comparable in validity with the natural sciences. That science is yet scarcely begun and may, indeed, turn out to be a chimæra. Mankind's hope is, however, in it. For the present, he can realize that his chance lies in adjusting as rationally as possible — a fact which men unconsciously acknowledge in practice, however stoutly they deny it in their tall talk and pretentious posturings.

The rational element is, at present, merely a feeder to the automatic process. The latter must be detected, if at all, over extended periods and by a more than superficial scrutiny. That is why, viewing society's

life without much perspective or insight, men think either that all is in hopeless disorder, or that anything and everything can be directly altered to suit them. But there can be no disorder where there is law, nor yet can there be a capricious or whimsical "choice," irrespective of life-conditions. Acceptation of that contention gives a broadly scientific basis for the survey of societal evolution and acts as a safeguard against the trickery of the plausible.

CHAPTER VII

COUNTERSELECTION

WHILE societal selection links on to natural selection, and while, in its early stages, amidst unmitigated violence, it is little more than a variation on the process of nature, we have seen that, as it develops, it takes on a characteristic mode of its own. It becomes specifically distinguishable from natural selection. It uses a different set of criteria. This is because it operates as between groups rather than as between individuals, and so favors social superiorities rather than biological ones. For example, in the conflicts between the Roman legions and the Germans, the social qualities of discipline, organization, etc., were plainly favored for extension and propagation over superior physical qualities of individuals. They had a higher survival-value for society. Thus does a variation on the process of nature rise up to supplant its parent stock. It is understandable that an observer, with eye trained upon the nature-process and the resulting survival of the biologically fit, should conclude that societal selection is antagonistic to natural selection, that, if the latter is selection *par excellence*, any selection that results in the survival of, or in an increase in the "margin of toleration" for, the biologically less fit must be counteracting: counterselection, or inverse selection.

By way of rendering the conception of counterselection as objective as possible, there is to be cited a list of factors in the life of modern society which are asserted to be counterselective. The aim is not exhaustiveness of illustration, but merely the portrayal of what counterselection is thought to be; so there will be no balancing of pros and cons over the listing of any particular factor as counterselective. When it has been made clear what counterselection is conceived to cover, and how it should be viewed from the standpoint of societal evolution, we may consider an ambitious plan — eugenics — for doing away with some of it through scientific selection. All this should throw more light upon the difficult topic of societal selection.

Darwin himself¹ cites several instances of counterselection, without using the term. Schallmayer² enters upon the subject rather systematically, listing the main social factors that he considers effective in promoting the survival of the unfit.

SOME COUNTERSELECTIVE FACTORS

War and military organization, he says, once selective, upon a lower stage of culture, where the best human animal had the best chance both in fighting and running away, have now become counterselective. Military authorities, upon the basis of a rigorous examination, reject all defectives and pick the best young men to face the machine-guns, while the inferior do not even see the enemy. Even among these selected men, the superior ones have little better chance

¹ *Descent of Man*, pp. 151 ff.

² *Vererbung und Auslese im Lebenslauf der Völker*, pp. 111 ff.

of survival than their fellows; strength, speed, keenness of sight do not profit their possessors as they once did among the savages, for all fight in ranks and are equally likely to provide "food for the bullets." Schallmayer instances the tremendous drain on French vitality due to Napoleon's levies, which came to include semi-defectives. Aside also from actual fighting, the man in the service is often exposed to unfavorable conditions which would cause a life-insurance company to revoke his policy or to raise his premiums, to an irregular existence, and to temptations from which the stay-at-home is relatively protected. Again, though he may have escaped all these ills, more by luck than anything else, the soldier has lost several years of youth, necessary habits of steady industry are perhaps unformed, his chance of getting on in the world is lessened, his marriage is delayed, his family diminished. The feeblener stay-at-homes beget the next generation, which our author finds to be weaker.¹ The soldier is not infrequently demoralized for the rest of his life, and his children are likely thereby to suffer some diminution of opportunity, or even some positive and vital harm.

Schallmayer has in mind chiefly European conditions of thirty or more years ago; America, with its erstwhile diminutive standing-army and small navy, seemed then to be profiting enviably by reason of her beneficent isolation. But anyone who has gained a remote conception of the injury to the quality of population in the United States inflicted as a consequence of the Civil

¹Schallmayer's figures on France are confirmed by others on Japan, in the *Japan Magazine*, reported in *N. Y. Times* (Aug. 29, 1915). The Japanese conscription-levy, twenty years after the war with China, showed recruits inferior to those of preceding and following years.

War — not to mention the economic and political burdens which we have since borne — needs not to have it proved from others' experience that war has a strongly counterselective aspect.

Attention might again be called to the trenchant paragraphs of Spencer¹ respecting the metamorphosis of societal ideals and institutions brought about by a trend toward militarism. Books condemnatory of war, especially during and since the last convincing exhibition of its destructiveness, are wellnigh innumerable. An eminent biologist² has written several. A Russian writer³ dilates upon the fate of the intellectuals in Russia during the early years of the Soviet rule; and informed persons know how that fated class has been scattered to the ends of the earth and has suffered from tuberculosis and other decimating diseases that go with undernourishment.

Schallmayer cites, among the ills of army life, some which have since disappeared; he does not do justice to the whole case of war, in all its bearings — which, indeed, he did not set out to do. His main contentions are confined to showing one aspect of war in bold outlines. This is exactly what we want of him, in the present connection.

Again, the modern industrial organization does not favor solely the biologically fitter, thereby enhancing their chances in life, and so their opportunity to hand down their qualities to a numerous progeny. Primitive industry, in hunting, herding, and the other occupations that bring men into close contact with nature, were largely selective. There was small place for defectives. A blind man, for instance, had few or no chances, and there was no one to educate him in basketry or massage (where, it is said, his tactile

¹ *Principles of Sociology*, I, § 266.

² Jordan, D. S., *War and the Breed* (Boston, 1915); *War's Aftermath: A Preliminary Study of the Eugenics of War* (Boston, 1915).

³ Oberutcheff, K. M., letter in *N. Y. Times*, dated July 4, 1920.

dexterities lend him a certain superiority).¹ If, under high civilization, a man is to be a machine, certain relatively low qualities become the basis of selection, and strength is so disadvantaged that women and children can take his place. The biological ills of the industrial system have been strongly stated by many socialistic writers.

At the other end of the scale of prosperity, further, the institution of property operates to replace "natural mating" with the less impulsive type. It also ushers into domestic life not a few of the biologically unfit who are well provided with this world's goods. The way in which property is inherited operates not infrequently to limit procreation on the part of eligible parents, and to throw all the opportunities of early marriage, possession of a large family, and the like, in the way of the less fit. This was one of the counterselective factors instanced by Darwin in what he said of primogeniture and entailed estates, whereby a feeble elder son might be favored over the other children — a situation which even savages avoid.² Some critics of the French system believe that there are equally bad results accruing from laws of inheritance which involve the splitting up of estates.

Schallmayer lists as counterselective also celibacy, late marriage, and the restriction of the size of families. The last two of these will be considered presently.³ Celibacy, it is thought, is more likely to

¹ It is complained that maimed men are being forced out of their jobs, because, under the Workman's Compensation law, insurance companies will not accept them as risks — not because they are not competent enough. *N. Y. Times* (July 19, 1914).

² Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, I, § 156.

³ Pp. 266 ff., below.

appear where marriage is delayed beyond the more impressionable years. And where it has been a policy it has often removed the pick of the young men and women from the ranks of the potential parents. They were drawn into the army or into religious establishments.

A number of authors, including Galton, digress while speaking of celibacy, generally with Spanish conditions in mind, to the activity of such an institution as the Holy Inquisition, which resolutely repressed, where it did not eliminate, any persons who had mentality or originality enough to become heretic. These left few descendants, at least in the land of oppression; and the result, for the society, was the loss of its best elements.

One of the most unexpected of the counterselective factors is the development of medicine, in its several branches.¹ At first sight this seems to constitute the chief boon wrung by man from hostile nature. But, in a sense, it is a gift in the yielding of which nature might be pardoned for having been reluctant. Briefly, all these agencies, though of prevailing excellence, yet are counterselective in this: that they rear up to the age of maturity and of procreation many who formerly fell early beneath the sweep of natural selection. Precisely because these agencies constitute, from several points of view, the most evident and important benefits of civilization, do they become checks upon the action of the pitiless adapting agency of nature. Through the development of civilization, as has been seen, man

¹ This contention is supported in a plain-spoken article on "The Rôle of the Medical Profession in Biology," by Dr. Beddard, in the *Guy's Hospital Gazette*, quoted in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 3, 1927).

withdraws himself from beneath the untempered sway of natural forces; here, it appears, he has possibly emancipated himself almost too fully. Selection as a preliminary to mating — the death of the weakly before maturity — has often been displaced and delayed until mating has been accomplished, after which time it is powerless to secure to the “fittest” of the next generation their old birthright of unburdened and unhindered development. And the old-time survival-with-little-aid as a guarantee of proper mating has as yet been replaced by no strong and controlling body of mores.

An eminent Boston physician has said that a large number of men and women seem designed by nature for no nobler purpose than extermination. Before the development of the modern sciences, these, in the processes devised by nature to insure the survival of the fittest, were wiped out by such plagues as tuberculosis and typhoid, which took them because they were weaklings. Since medicine has set itself to save them, it has faced the most involved problems in its history.¹

Not to devote a disproportionate amount of space to inverse selection, but one other factor is singled out for mention: what Schallmayer calls the “individualistic tendency of humanitarianism.” This means the tendency to regard a case of relief, let us say, as a relation merely of individuals, in which the society is conceded no interest. Humanitarianism in general is, of course, counterselective, in that it always eases the struggle for existence and so operates — as perhaps its chief aim — against the elimination of those who are losing in the

¹ “Doctors Thwarting Nature,” in *New Haven Journal-Courier* (Oct. 4, 1913).

conflict.¹ Carried to senseless excess, as in Spain of the late Middle Ages, it foists upon the really wholesome and vital body of society a parasitic burden; beggar-migrations at one time literally invaded Spain, where indiscriminating charity was one of the surest titles to heavenly bliss — indiscriminating, not because it was assumed that none of the beneficiaries was unworthy, but because of the religious peril from turning away a single worthy soul.

Nobody denies the social value of willingness to aid the unfortunate with discrimination; what is lost biologically is doubtless made up for socially. No one denies the social virtue, to say nothing of the personal obligation to society, of succoring a fellow-man in distress, whatever form the affliction may take.² That, however, benevolence should extend to the assurance of the "right" to procreate, is another matter. "The individualistic tendency" of Schallmayer is one that is blind to all those larger group-interests which at times dictate refusal of aid where the personal inclination would be to afford it. No one is fit to give charity whose sentiment overweighs his intelligence, and whose perspective is bounded by the individual relation of giver and recipient.

There is also the "Forgotten Man"³ whose interests are ignored at peril to society. It is easy enough to vote funds for more comfortable prisons; but somebody pays for them. Who? Not the philanthropists alone, or at all. Taxes take the pennies of the self-

¹ "The Conflict between Benevolence and Biology," reporting an attack by Karl Pearson, rebutted by others, in *Science and Discovery*.

² Sumner, W. G., *What Social Classes Owe to Each Other*, chs. IV, XI.

³ *Ibid.*, chs. IX, X.

supporting, law-abiding, common people, who can ill spare the loss. The "white man's burden" — keeping hordes of Orientals alive, that they may propagate an increasing burden for the self-supporting — is largely the "Forgotten Man's."¹

We have the conception of counterselection now before us and may examine it, at first upon the broadest lines.

In truth, since the whole trend of civilization is to interpose barriers to the action of natural selection, societal selection is logically certain to preserve those who would perish under nature. It must always be realized that societal selection operates on a plane of its own, demanding standards of fitness differing from those of natural selection. The only sense that there is in adjudging its results by a comparison with those of natural selection lies in the fact that the biological test is the ultimate and final one. There is a good deal of sense in doing this; in view of our knowledge that man is, at last analysis, an animal in a natural environment, there can be no doubt at all about his ultimate subjection to the laws that control organic nature. His new mode of selection is performable, as it were, only upon a scaffolding created by his civilization — solely in an artificialized environment. If the scaffolding is shaken down, the environment dis-artificialized, by some catastrophe, he is again an animal among other animals. He cannot put more and more dependence upon the scaffolding unless he is constantly strengthening its supports. He can never bid utter defiance to

¹ "French Doctors Save African Native Race," in *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 26, 1929).

natural law, ignore biological qualities altogether, cut loose once and for all from the earth. It would be dangerous indeed if societal selection were going to become unreservedly counterselective.

It is unthinkable that anything on that order can take place. In general, a strong belief in the evolutionary process fortifies one against the prediction that we are headed for ruin because we are, as some assert, breeding from the unfittest. If we had been going to ruin, we have already had enough good chances to do so. We have undoubtedly made errors and paid heavily for them; these payments in pain and loss have been due to the operation of selection, sometimes natural, again societal, in disposing of erratic variations, originated or tolerated by us, that were leading to maladjustment. If we carry on our operations upon the scaffolding too violently or too near the edge, we shall undoubtedly get a fall and it will hurt; but the whole structure does not collapse thereby. What we need for safety is to know the strength of the underpinning and its carrying-power. That is the limit within which our societal selection can go its own course, whether or not it is counterselective. For safety it is necessary to restrain the antics of those whose balance and sense of caution are only rudimentarily developed.

In any case we have to live on our scaffolding; even if all societal selection were counterselective, we cannot go back to survival on the basis of mere biological fitness. But we do well to keep an eye on the nature-processes; and those who cry out against counterselection and emphasize the need of biological fitness are performing for us the great service of advertising the presence of

limits beyond which it is unsafe to allow variations in the mores to go.

For well-being we want to avoid the ills that attend grand-scale selection, if we can. The collapse of any section of the scaffolding of civilization — for instance, as a result of war — shakes the whole structure, even if it does not cast it down; and those who have not been hurled into the pit of brute violence must yet suffer and sacrifice with those who have. The life and prospects of all civilized men were darkened by the war lately witnessed, the work of civilization was set back, and much of it had to be done over again. The danger attending the growth of inapt variations should not be minimized or ignored — the less so as, in societal evolution, such variations may develop a great train of consequences before they can be haled to the bar of selection.¹ If counterselection is no more than tardiness to act, on the part of societal selection, even so it is well to have the dangers of such delay set forth; for if not anticipated, selection must at length be exercised by the brutal, primordial methods of general violence and destruction.

The following extract² is in point: "The recent agitation in the French press against the alarming spread of leprosy in Southern France reached the culminating point this week, when Clément Vautel wrote a humorous article in *Le Matin*, prophesying that leprosy would take the place of appendicitis as a popular malady and concluding that the hypochondriacs had found a new source of alarm and doctors a new source of profit. That the leprosy scare is being sufficiently advertised to become a joke paradoxically indicates its importance, while the report of the latest meeting of the Academy of Medicine did not tend in the direction of reassur-

¹ P. 72, above.

² *N. Y. Times* (May 10, 1914).

ance. After a warm debate the Academy voted resolutions to the effect :

“First : That leprosy be made a notifiable disease.

“Second : That lepers submit to special treatment, and even isolation, according to the gravity of the case.

“Third : That foreign lepers be forbidden to enter French territory.

“Fourth : That measures be taken to warn the public to prevent the spread of leprosy and treat existing cases more effectively.

“The following extract from an article in *Le Journal* indicates the state of public feeling. ‘During the ignorant Middle Ages lepers were condemned to eternal solitude, to wear a hooded cloak and ring a warning bell. They were forbidden to drink and wash in public water, to enter a church or tavern, or even to speak to their fellow-men, and finally had to undergo the frightful ceremony of hearing their own death mass, receiving a handful of earth on the head, meaning that henceforth they were dead and buried.

“‘Thus leprosy decreased, but the modern humane methods allow lepers to mix, trade, and even to marry. Thus leprosy spreads.’”

Those who warn of counterselection are inciters to rational action, which, despite the difficulties attending it, we must, as civilized men, try to get the knowledge and skill and fortitude to carry out.

“COUNTERSELECTION” IS NORMAL IN SOCIETAL EVOLUTION

The conclusion is here offered that what is called counterselection is straight and regular societal selection; only the differences between its results and those of natural selection have caught the eye, and the derived mode of societal selection has not been distinguished. Cases of what is called counterselection might well prove maleficent if man lived under nature,

but he does not ; occurring in an artificialized environment, they are harmless enough. For example, a near-sighted man would be one of the unfit under nature ; but the peculiar form of human adaptation, through a materialized idea (glasses), renders him fit enough to discharge useful functions in a modern civilized society. The other part of what is called counterselection is composed of extreme and erratic variations in the mores which have not yet been subjected to selection at all — for instance, indiscriminating philanthropy. These are ominous as tending to expose to a heavy strain the supports (capital, labor) of civilization. Either set of cases might be counterselective under the conditions of a virgin natural environment ; under such conditions even the wearing of clothes and living in houses are counterselective. The covering truth is that instances of so-called counterselection are normal phenomena of societal evolution.

If phenomena are normal and longstanding within a certain range of life, the presumption of any evolutionist is that they have survival-value within that range. It is irrelevant that they look abnormal upon criteria sound enough in some other range. Many primitive practices, among them taboos on foods, cannibalism, infanticide, the ordeal-trial, blood-vengeance, wife-purchase, nephew-inheritance, human sacrifice, measures against the evil eye, appear to a modern man as ridiculous, contemptible, or wicked ; but they are normal enough where they flourish, and the social utility of many of them can be demonstrated. The trouble, we repeat, with those who talk indiscriminatingly about counterselection is that they confuse

the two types or modes of evolution, the organic and the societal, with their two contrasting types of adjustment, organic fitness and societal fitness, suited to the two contrasting types of environment, natural and artificialized. Confusion is easy here, for all living beings have to adjust to the former environment; but men, living in society, have in it and its mores and institutions a kind of corporate adjustment which permits of partial physical unfitness of the individual provided the societal adjustment is adequate — not the total biological unfitness of the individual, by any means, for nature can in such cases break through the societal protection and search out its victims. It is to be emphasized, time and again, that no science of society can ever be developed unless the eye be removed from the all-enthraling individual and fixed upon that which it is proposed to study, namely, society. To set out to study society by concentrating on the individual is like trying to study physiology by ignoring all the organs and paying attention only to the cell.

Men must live and they must procreate, if life is to go on. Nature attends to this in one way, society in another. Society allows what nature does not, and in so doing defeats, in some degree, natural selection, making what is called an inverse or counter process. Then, because such a process would be disastrous in nature, it is assumed to be disastrous for society. No one would doubt, for instance, that the assurance of a right to life, conceded to all who conform to what are regarded as the essential mores, is a genuine product of societal evolution, unrepresented in the organic range.

As has been pointed out, the issue of life and death, ever present in nature, has been largely removed with the assumption by society of the duty of seeing that none of its members die of starvation or exposure, and with the limitation, within the in-group, of physical conflict between individuals and sub-groups. It is taken to be the duty of a society to keep all its members from dying. This is why societal selection, except in its rudest forms, cannot hope for the clean-cut results reached by a selection issuing in survival or non-survival. This very fact that all members of a society are equally entitled to protection by it constitutes a real departure from nature's norms, for there is no distinction made between biologically fit and unfit. There is natural selection only where the unfit are weeded out, leaving the fit all that there is; a selection which, not disadvantaging the fit, no more than sets fit and unfit upon an approximate equality in the competition of life, is far enough from natural selection to deserve the "counter" designation. Such leveling measures are normal in societal evolution.

Society, not nature, confers the right to live; now as to the opportunity to propagate. The fit in nature are recognized by the fact that they are numerous. Fewer die and more are born. In society the death-rate is modified as has been described. No doubt medical success in reducing the death-rate — in increasing the average length of life — has redounded somewhat more to the advantage of the wealthy and educated parts of the population than to that of others; but certainly there is a strong tendency toward the socialization of achievement along this line, so that all get

the benefits.¹ It is said that the rich and the poor get the best medical care — the former for money, the latter for nothing — and that the middle class is at once too poor and too rich to get it. In a general way the various groups in a society do not contrast so very widely in this respect.

There yet remains the birth-rate. It declines with the advance of standards of living, so that we even hear of (upper-)class-suicide. There is a contrast or spread between the classes in this case; we find that the count of offspring per pair varies widely among the different groups in a modern society, being correlated as it is so closely with the standard of living. The upper classes are said to be barely or scarcely reproducing themselves; while over against them stand what one author has called the "swarming, spawning millions."

Leaving out of account, for the moment, the deliberate restriction of offspring, we have Galton's calculation² to demonstrate to us that anything which delays marriage acts strongly to reduce the numbers of those who put it off, relatively to the count of those who do not. If M and N are each 22 years of age, and M and all his descendants marry at once, while N and his descendants marry at 33, the proportion of mature M's to N's will be, in 300 years, as 26 is to 1. Elsewhere³ Galton states that the fertility of mothers married at the ages of 17, 22, 27, and 32 is as 6, 5, 4, and 3. He concludes that a "heavy doom" hangs over the group that practices late marriage. Now, it is a fact of com-

¹ Sumner, W. G., "Who Win by Progress?" in *Collected Essays*, III ("Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 169 ff.

² *Hereditary Genius* (1870 ed.), pp. 353-356.

³ *Human Faculty*, pp. 321, 323.

mon knowledge that there is a great disparity as to the age of marriage between vocational classes in a modern society. It is lowest with the lowest-skilled groups and rises with the social scale, so that the lowering of the birth-rate involved in postponement has not affected society evenly. The more poorly equipped are increasing faster than the rest and will presumably come to constitute a preponderant fraction of the whole. If such increasing constituents are the unfit, evidently we have a clear case for the counterselectionist.

Perhaps the alarmist would have some trouble in proving that the less fecund classes are the biologically fitter, but we can let him, in this case, carry his assertion to the plane of societal evolution. He can say that those classes which the society itself recognizes as of superior value to it — the highly trained and efficient — produce more slowly than those which have little more than their bodily strength to put into the social stock of power. This is doubtless true, and it is significant if it means a deficit of the highly equipped. Postponement is an unfavorable variation, certainly, for those who exhibit it, if they disappear after a while. But their places are filled from below and the process goes on.

All this is entirely normal in societal evolution. It will be recalled that in the Law of Population there is the element of the standard of living, with which the growth of numbers varies inversely.¹ Those who rise in this standard limit their numbers. Its presence in a high power is characteristic of those who know and who foresee by having become trained and efficient.

¹ P. 30, above.

With a high or a higher standard of living in view, they marry later and, possessing the knowledge of means of restriction, have smaller families. It is a case of the sensitive part of a society performing an adaptation, undoubtedly in its own interest, but, more widely viewed, also for the welfare of society as a whole; for here we see a society adapting itself to its available means of subsistence on a given stage of the arts.

The two foregoing aspects of counterselection are of the widest, since they have to do with the fundamental functions of living and of procreating. Doubtless all of the more specific factors listed above as counterselective have contributed to the survival of biologically unfit individuals or even sub-groups; but any biological disservice is counterbalanced by societal utility. From the standpoint of the general evolution of societies, mores with biological drawbacks, or what look to be such, are normal, either representing forms of corporate adaptation by the society in whose mores they are to the life-conditions in which it exists, or constituting, it may be, extreme and erratic variations. Celibacy, certainly ecclesiastical celibacy, belongs to the latter category, and in its pronounced form was presently selected away. In fact it was never enforceable, running as it did athwart the path of one of the strongest natural impulses.¹

Survival or non-survival alone is strong proof of fitness or unfitness, but without citation of evidence, in any range of evolution. The more searching question is as to the reasons for triumph or failure in com-

¹ Lea, H. C., *Historical Sketch of Sacerdotal Celibacy in the Christian Church*.

petition, that is, as to what qualities made for fitness or the reverse. It is sometimes objected to evolution in general that it involves circular reasoning: the fittest are those that survive, but they are proved to be the fittest because they survive. This is a shallow quip. Evolution is not a logical curiosity; evolutionists have been too serious and hardworking to have the time to joke that meditators have for their word-juggling. Evolution shows *why* the fittest are fittest, not by verbal contortions calculated to bewilder but by elaborate studies of organisms and their life-conditions. When it is stated that assurance of a general right to life is normal in a society, or that postponement of marriage is characteristic of its more cultured members, to each of these practices is conceded the element of fitness or expediency. It has been proved inexpedient in the fact to confer the right to life only upon some instead of generally and impartially upon all group-members; such discrimination has been tried and given up. The postponement of marriage has fitness because it promotes the standard of living, thereby making for what most people agree is a desirable social result. Naturally, the full analysis of mores and institutions, as respects their function in adjustment, is a long and intricate process which can be no more than indicated here.¹

War and the military organization, the industrial organization, marriage and the family, medicine and hygiene, and humanitarianism are all societal adjustments not represented in nature. They are what they are because of services discharged to society. Of

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, aims at such an analysis.

course they will pinch the individual, from time to time, for there is an inevitable disharmony between the individual and the societal interest. The following miscellaneous considerations may reveal the alleged counterselective factors in a truer light, as inevitable adjustments in society's interest.

Even though war discriminates against the biologically fit, the warfare of civilized peoples cannot but be, as an adjustment, what it is: the evolution of war has led from individual conflict to the collision of larger and larger groups. It is now no longer man to man, but army to army; it is not even ship to ship, but fleet to fleet. It requires special training of great numbers; it conscripts industry; and it cannot be said that those ineligible as actual combatants do not help by their losses to pay its price. Out of this situation, which is itself normal enough in societal evolution, arise ills which rational action may lessen as it can. Movements toward peace and peaceful settlement of collisions of interest reveal a considerable element of the rational.

In the industrial organization the same shift from the individual to the group, characteristic of societal evolution, is patent. The unit-man does not count unless he allies himself with other units having common interests, as in trade-unions, and then, through industrial war, strives for their realization. Discomfort and pain call for such struggle toward adaptation, and it is taking place.

The following report of an address by Professor Sedgwick ¹ illustrates several of the points before us, but particularly the efficiency

¹ *Brooklyn Eagle*, quoted in *New Haven Journal-Courier* for Dec. 22, 1913.

of automatic selection operating through the self-interest of individuals and groups.

"There is a pretty deep significance in the idea presented by Prof. W. T. Sedgwick before the life insurance presidents, that it is much more important for society to save the man of 40, the trained wealth-producer, than to save babies. The professor does not, of course, oppose or deprecate efforts to reduce infant mortality, but he favors and exalts such community experimentation as will prolong the period of efficiency in human life, after efficiency has been proven.

"If babies are kept from dying, it is manifest enough to the economist that a fairly large proportion of those saved are congenitally inefficient; that the interference with the law of the survival of the fittest, justified as it is by all humanitarians, has disadvantages as well as advantages. It may and often does burden the future with incompetents to be supported or partly supported by the community or by individuals.

"As Professor Sedgwick says, the man of 40, skilled at his trade, a steady wage-earner, has passed the test of 'survival of the fittest.' He is one of the fit who have survived. What can the community do to prolong his productive energy?

"Clearly secure tenure of a job, adequate wages, fair hours and encouragement to use leisure intelligently must be considered. The need of quick and scientific attention to any sickness is likewise apparent. Ventilation in working rooms and in homes is important. Other details will suggest themselves to keen minds. The self-interest of the life insurance companies, enlisted to save the man of 40, may be of immense advantage to the human race."

Whatever may be said of "natural mating," marriage and property have always been closely linked together and the union has rendered the family more stable, which was necessary in the interest of any society. Primogeniture is often favorable to a weak first son, it may be; but it developed along with the societal evolution of property, and seems to have no more ill effect than the system of sharing property among all the

children. Societal evolution is the evolution of society and its institutions, not of a series of individuals or circumscribed groups.

As respects the counterselective aspect of medicine and hygiene, in that they preserve the physically weak until they can marry and pass on their unfitness, it is perhaps superfluous to recall yet again the difference in mode and plane of the societal type of evolution. In human society, whatever the case in nature, the sickly mature have often contributed to the strengthening and adjustment of the institutions of society, though by procreation they may have subtracted something from its biological soundness. The question always is the same: What will the scaffolding stand? Is the advantage worth the danger incurred?

Though this danger should never be minimized, it is often not so great as it seems at first sight. Attention is called to the fact, as an instance of counterselection due to advance in medical science, that women need more and more care at the time of child-birth; that even domestic animals are coming to require it. Very well: they can get it, in our artificialized environment, just as the near-sighted person can get glasses. Similarly with other such needs. Civilization, to be sure, has led to the crowding of people together, and this has been attended by the development of large-scale maladies; but it is an inevitable societal evolution that has produced cities and slums; it could not have been otherwise. Thus even disease is normal — and, it may be added, so is crime. We adapt ourselves to these conditions in various ways impossible under nature. There is constant call for more knowledge,

especially knowledge that will contribute to societal welfare, and for selection operating in its light.

The case is similar with humanitarianism. It is plainly counterselective, viewed from the standpoint of the zoölogist, even in its least pretentious manifestations, as in the protection of life alluded to above. On the plane of societal evolution, however, it is the society's interests, always, that are paramount; and those are conserved, first of all, by the development of a sense of corporate responsibility and coöperation. We cannot but be our brothers' keepers. Extremes of short-sighted humanitarianism are variations not yet pruned away by selection.

The conclusion is that there is not much truth in what some people appear to believe: that what they call counterselection is something abnormal, due to some gratuitous oversight; that conditions allowing of it ought not to have been permitted to develop. That development, on the plane of societal evolution, was inevitable and also expedient, as a part of a greater whole. Yet no one wishes at all to deride the criticisms of our social order, implied or expressed, as if it were a perfect thing. No one wants to advocate a let-alone policy, as against serious, rational interference. We are all organic beings, and as such, subject ultimately to organism-selection. Every one of the counterselective factors we have considered, and others, too, are, in their extreme variations, menacing to the well-being of society. Their presence calls for tirelessness in the acquisition of knowledge and unabated vigilance in the exercise of selection based upon it.

We have not been utterly slothful and torpid in doing

this. Take one illustration: the case of humanitarianism. We would never duplicate Spain's performances in the matter of the beggars' crusades. Charity organizations, manned by a personnel which includes cool heads as well as warm hearts, are becoming "hard-boiled" agencies of discouragement to the sturdy rogue; for him they are turning into houses of correction. In 1929, the Red Cross refused famine aid to China, on the ground that it furnished only emergency relief, while the predicament of China was chronic — and its own fault, owing to political chaos, corruption, and overpopulation.¹ Here is hope which we must not forget when we encounter the mores of sentimentalism, mentioned elsewhere.²

EUGENICS AS A PROGRAM OF RATIONAL SELECTION

In this chapter, which is one of digression and illustration rather than in the direct line of argument, the topic of eugenics, though hackneyed, can scarcely be passed over. Counterselection consists in good part in the elimination of the biologically fit from their proportionate share in the precreation of the next generations; but eugenics is concerned with having future generations of the highest possible quality. Hence it is bound to run foul of counterselection. And the fact that it is a special and aspiring program of rational selection renders its examination, now that we have surveyed the general case, the more useful and appropriate. An amount of indiscriminate effort at "social uplift" now goes under the name of eugenics.

¹ *N. Y. Times* (Sept. 28, 1929).

² Pp. 113 ff., above.

Imbecile pretentiousness and yearning sentimentality have seized upon the term and are rapidly and glibly laying it waste. In what is here presented all reference is to eugenics as understood and expounded by its founder, Francis Galton.¹

Galton wanted to secure, in time, the rational breeding of human beings, that is, rational human mating within the marriage institution. Eugenics has to do with "all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race; also with those that develop them to the utmost advantage." As in Galton's essay, attention is here confined, to "the improvement of the inborn qualities, or stock, of some one human population." "The aim of Eugenics," says Galton, "is to bring as many influences as can be reasonably employed, to cause the useful classes in the community to contribute *more* than their proportion to the next generation." This is to be done through investigation followed by popularization of results; by these means Galton hoped at length — after generations — to introduce eugenics "into the national conscience like a new religion." "I see no impossibility," he says, "in Eugenics becoming a religious dogma among mankind, but its details must first be worked out sedulously in the study. Over-zeal leading to hasty action would do harm, by holding out expectations of a new golden age, which will certainly be falsified and cause the science to be discredited. The first and main point is to secure the general intellectual acceptance of Eugenics as a hopeful and most important study. Then let its principles work into the heart of the nation, who will

¹ *Essays in Eugenics*, pp. 35, 38, 43.

gradually give practical effect to them in ways that we may not wholly foresee."

Here is a plan for scientific selection which possesses the unique character of an attempt to secure better societal adaptation through action, not on environment, but on heredity. It stands out for this reason in contrast to the many tentatives which aim at alteration of the environment. I do not intend to describe it here in detail; the works of Galton and others ¹ have set it before the world. I wish only to view eugenics from the standpoint of what we have learned about the nature and limits of rational selection.

The program of eugenics has been called ambitious. In former connections,² the mores have been seen to be resistive of change in proportion as they are of long standing and are inveterate. The plan here is to alter, not the ephemeral folkways of fashion, nor yet a method of industry; not a type of amusement, nor yet a local political form; it aims at a revolutionary change in the mores which surround one of the most vital functions of individual or society — that of self-perpetuation. It is hoped by its proponent that sedulous labor in the study will work out the details of what may then become a religious dogma. Certainly this enterprise is ambitious — so ambitious that a noted medical authority ³ pronounces, after listening to the proposals: "I am not sure but that Nature, in its own blind, impulsive way, does not manage things better than we can by any light of reason or by any rules

¹ A summary occurs in several of the contributions to *Eugenics*; *Twelve University Lectures*, collected by Lucy James Wilson.

² Pp. 61, 73, 80 ff., 105, 128, above.

³ Dr. Maudsley, in *Sociological Papers* (1904), p. 54.

which we can at present lay down." Distrust of the human agency, that is, of any form of selection except the automatic, assails one who has any conception of the difficulties involved in this project. For into the whole matter enters the eternal question of compensation and counterbalance, before whose unexpected eventualities the human mind stands abashed, and is fain to resign the issue to chance, or Nature, or God.

The only general answer to such a counsel of discouragement is that, for good or ill, man has been interfering with his own destiny now for some ages. In the pain of maladjustment, he has had to "do something," and at once. It has become a sort of "natural law" that he shall. Looked at in the broadest way, all human civilization, as we have repeatedly seen, has been the gradual accumulation of maxims and methods calculated to withdraw men from beneath the undisputed sway of nature-forces. From the invention of the hollowed log to the construction of an ocean greyhound, from primitive barter to modern exchange-operations, man has been putting his forces to better use or economizing them, in his endeavor to live, and then to live on a better scale. One may harbor reasonable doubts as to whether we are any happier for being civilized — whether the ratio of satisfactions to wants is greater; he may feel that for every increase in the satisfaction-numerator of the fraction there has taken place an equal or greater accession to the want-denominator; a scrutiny of the counterselective factors, several of which are the direct outcome of "conquests over nature" upon which the race has plumed itself, may suggest that we have been all the time tugging at

our own boot-straps; but notwithstanding all this, it is evident that it is man's earthly destiny, under some powerful constraint, to persist in setting up his intellect against "natural law." He will continue to do so. Hence the objections based upon misgivings and fear, however strong theoretically, fall out of practical reckoning; that a thing looks doubtful or impossible has never seriously deterred man from attempting it if he has wanted to — and sometimes his assault has not been a failure.

In default of much scientific study of such matters, this may be called a pious hope rather than an encouraging observation. To particularize a little more, it may be recalled that while certain ranges of the mores, where verification and demonstration are most readily secured, are more accessible to rational selection than others, the former do not include the mores of societal self-perpetuation. Sex-passion is a force that does not easily submit to the bridle except under the compulsion of restraints automatically evolved long ago. Galton tacitly admits this point when he goes back for his cases of control of sex-passion to primitive peoples and the childhood of societal organization. He cites as "restrictions on marriage": monogamy, endogamy, exogamy, the Australian marriages, taboo, prohibited degrees, and celibacy. The implication is that sex-passion has been restrained and so can be again; and the agency of control, as proposed in the eugenics program, is to be science. But let anyone explain and demonstrate how the primitive restrictions, or any one of them, arose out of the application of verified knowledge. The origin of all such forms is lost in the past;

but they must one and all have arisen before man was capable of understanding much of anything.¹ They go back to the ruder forms of selection practiced in the elder ages; it was those ruder forms, more nearly like those of nature, that alone had the power to define broad and sweeping mores such as are represented in Galton's list — and it is to such a list, I repeat, that he has had to take recourse to find a selection analogous in sweeping quality to that proposed in the program of eugenics.

Hence one cannot see the force of these supporting primitive instances on an issue presented to civilized peoples, one which is to involve modern science. Still less can he share Galton's hope that eugenics can be introduced "into the national conscience like a new religion." It is after such selection only as has produced the taboo, uncriticizable and imperative, that the mores can get the sanction of religion — and by religion I mean "old" religion, not "new," that is, an unreasoning fear of the unknown and supernatural, not a respect for the known and demonstrated. I mean the sweat of ghost-fear, not the gentle dew that is evoked by a logical or experimental demonstration. If one considers the origin and nature of religious dogmas, he will hesitate to believe, with Galton, that eugenics, even after sedulous work in the study, will emerge as such. Any serious student knows that to talk of a "new religion" is simply playing with words; "to make a new religion," says an eminent student² of religion, "is like making a tree." There is no real

¹ Pp. 35 ff., above.

² Inge, Dean W. R., "The Catholic Church and the Anglo-Saxon Mind," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXXI, 445.

religion that does not go back to unreasoning awe of the unknown. Only so does it exercise, for the masses of mankind, any compulsion on conduct. If anyone thinks he can introduce a religion among the masses by the use of statistical tables or microscopic sections, he is not intelligent enough about social subjects to be talking at all.

Galton could not have meant literally what he said about eugenics becoming a religion; his brief utterance on "Eugenics as a Factor in Religion" ¹ bears out that conviction. He seems to mean by a "new religion" a new ethics, that is, a new set of mores. But people less wise than Galton have meant literally what Galton said, and the statement deserves challenge.

It is evident that the application of what we have found to be true about the rational element to this case of proposed selection cannot leave us sanguine as to its realization. Still, a conclusion that the positive program of eugenics — saying who shall marry whom — stands small chance of being carried out under conditions as they exist in human society does not exclude the possibility of partial negative realization — saying who shall not marry whom. It is a waste of time to deduce and to rhapsodize about the details of a scheme under the mere vague hope that it is about to be realized — on the principle that "you cannot state the consequences of what never happened"; nevertheless, there is in the eugenics program a great idea which we can try to realize, in so far as the limits within which our action is confined will allow, thus adding to the sum of our civilization.² It is the strength of resistance

¹ *Essays in Eugenics*, pp. 68-70.

² P. 25, above.

encountered in the mores, of course, which delimits the hope of realization, in whole or in part, of any such program; and of partial measures it is the one which is capable of concrete demonstration that meets less resistance than the rest. Those measures of regulation stand the best chance of success which show a close relation to the concrete interests of individuals and groups, which seem to touch most closely upon local spheres of self-maintenance and self-realization. If people could realize what some of the foolish plans proposed would cost them personally, or what others, like the eugenics program, would save, their support would be more discriminating. Consider the saving of capital, not to mention human heart-ache, if all hereditary defects could be cancelled out by a hundred years of eugenic breeding.

It is easier always to demonstrate the need of cutting off certain practices, when their bad results have been verified over and over again, than it is to enlist sympathy for some serious, positive project, however reasonable, which has never been tried. Men have been partially taught by sorry experience to shy at "reason" and "logic," and to trust experience. It is easier, then, to enact a proscription than a prescription. Regulations of conduct, from the Tables of the Law forward and back, have been couched in the negative; A prohibition has always been a more clean-cut and cogent form, less exposed to misconception, than a precept. Negative regulations lend themselves less readily to interpretation or cavil, and so inspire more confidence that they will be observed.

In conformity with these conditions it is that type

of eugenics that is called "negative eugenics" which shows some prospect of being able to introduce the rational element into the field. Non-eugenic practices can be crippled, if they are not eradicated, and may be held within narrower bounds. In any society the wiser and more powerful are constantly handing down some of the ways of their group to the more ignorant and less powerful, and by virtue of their superior intelligence they are able, through the control of the regulative organization, to set up interdictions which, if they do not have the force of taboos sanctioned by religious fear, have at least the power of the state behind them. Such regulations, as has been said, are effective in proportion as they are negative and concrete in form, like the primitive taboo; contrast the laconic "Thou shalt not kill" with the diffuse "Thou shalt practice eugenics."

This latter sort of precept will not do; societal control must be more rude and peremptory and more definite. It must make utterance more as follows: "Thou shalt not, being an idiot, marry and beget thine own kind." Eugenics legislation can turn resolutely to the heavy-handed prohibition of the grosser, the more obvious and undeniable phenomena of counterselection. Very likely an almost general consent could be gained to the prohibition of the union of two imbeciles; in fact, laws now exist forbidding it, and they are not so foreign to the feelings and prejudices of the masses as to be dead letter.

But when we try to prohibit more than the obvious cases, we encounter, again, the limits set by the mores. The latter even have a certain consistency among

themselves, so that an attempted alteration of certain conventions may wreck on the opposition of certain others which are apparently only rather distantly correlated with the ones assailed. Recent laws about sterilization horrify many sensible people; and to justify such a horror there is always a reservoir of argumentation, illustration, and interpretation to be drawn upon. As the assault upon the gross and obvious is left behind and an attempt is made, for example, to insist upon a physical examination of those who propose to contract matrimony,¹ the ranks of the objectors (and so, of course, of the evaders) fill up. The prospects of the laws about sterilization and the health-certificate for marriage do not seem bright. The lack of rational basis in them is not accountable for this; it is not upon that criterion that they are opposed or evaded. The trouble is that they are not consistent with the body of the code. They are offensive to "modesty," to "human rights," and so on. Here are again the limits, set in the mores, to a program of a scientific selection aiming at eugenic regulation. These limits are, after all, very narrow; and experience shows that they are by no means overcome by inscribing a law in the statute book.

If the reformers wish to do what can be done instead of dreaming about a world-beatification that has no prospect of occurring, there is yet another way, already indicated in passing, to take hold of the issue. They may not be able to enlist the enthusiasm of the ordinary man for the welfare of the tenth or fifteenth

¹ Symposium on "Should Ministers Marry the Physically Unfit?" in *N. Y. Times* (June 2, 1912); also on insistence by doctors on the Wassermann Test, in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 4, 1914).

generation from now ; but if they can visualize for that man the fact that he is paying, here and now, out of his own fund for self-maintenance, for the support of those who should never have been born, they can touch him upon a very sensitive nerve. If every consumer realized that he himself is paying the kind of taxes known as "indirect," there might conceivably be a totally different alignment of opinion based upon a shifted conception of interest. So here. This is where any campaign of education ought to find its strength : it can engender, by disseminating verified knowledge, more rationality in selection. Not only is that which touches upon the struggle for a living, and for a standard of living, most readily apprehended, but also, in the face of that struggle, action follows closer on the heels of understanding than elsewhere in the societal range.

The case of eugenics has been taken to illustrate a program of rational selection directed against a form of counterselection. It is an extreme case, proposing as it does an alteration of deep-seated mores surrounding the union of the sexes and an establishment of new ways in that which has to do with the compelling passion that insures society's self-perpetuation. The issue is at its hardest ; but what is true of it, is true, in its degree, of any lesser scheme of the sort.

A less revolutionary scheme of this order is the introduction of birth-control. We are told that we can choose between contraception and war,¹ and the argument, if one is disposed to heed Malthus at all, is not so

¹ Norton, H. K., "Birth Control or War?" in *The Outlook* (March 26, 1930).

fanciful. There are pros and cons, which will not be detailed here. Most of the latter are of an origin in religious dogma. It is to be noted only that, whether or not the introduction of information on contraception produces a relaxation of morals, it will probably result in fewer illegitimate children and certainly in the chance for a higher standard of living in families where at present unrelieved fecundity submerges all quality in quantity.

The subject of selection among the mores is by far the most difficult of the topics which we have set out to survey under societal evolution. To those who accept the essentials of the last chapters, societal selection cannot, at any rate, remain merely two words, used more or less at random to connote a certain something in the life of society vaguely perceived to be analogous to natural selection in the organic world.

CHAPTER VIII

TRANSMISSION

THAT novelties arise in the mores and that they are subject to elimination, with preservation of the more expedient, are facts of observation. Then those which effect adjustment are transmitted, not only to the next generation but also across, from class to class and from society to society. Organic variations, having been subjected to weeding out by natural selection, leave a residue which is passed on by heredity through the germ-plasm. For the mores, heredity is not the transmitting agency. It is possible that the hereditary disposition of certain races, or even of one of the sexes, may predispose them to a degree of pugnacity, acquiescence, or receptivity; but this is not much different from a hereditary susceptibility to disease, where the disease is not inherited at all. The mores are acquired characters and are not inherited, but learned. One of the outstanding mores, we know, is language;¹ human groups have used it for ages; yet, with all this practice, every infant has to learn it anew. Nor does any child, despite, again, the expression "to the manner born," come into the world equipped with etiquette; children are born unmannerly and suppress no natural propensity by reason of consideration for

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, §§ 135-141.

others. It takes the whole force of the societal environment, beginning with parental discipline if the child is fortunate enough to be accorded that boon, to coerce the young life into the mores of its time and place. To live in society, the mores have to be learned just as the rules of a game have to be learned before one can participate in it; the mores are the rules of the game for life in society. And as such they constitute constant limitation upon "natural" action, limitation called for by the presence of others.

TRADITION

The factor in societal evolution corresponding to heredity in organic evolution is tradition; and its agency is the nervous system, by way of its various "senses," rather than the germ-plasm. The organs of transmission are the eye, ear, tongue, and hand, not those of sex. Variation in nature causes the offspring to differ from the parents and from one another; variation in the folkways causes those of one period or place to differ from their predecessors, their neighbors, and to a less extent among themselves. Variation is the vital fact at the bottom of change. Heredity in nature causes the offspring to resemble or repeat the present type; tradition in societal evolution causes the mores of one period or place to repeat those of another. Each is a stringent conservator. Variation, the radical or "progressive" element, secures diversity — a series of explosions; heredity and tradition the conservation of type. They act as salutary brakes. If there were no force of heredity or tradition, there could be no likeness between or classification of either natural or

societal types; the creation hypothesis would be the only tenable one, for, as no two forms would show a "family likeness," there could be no basis for a theory of descent. If there were no variation, all of nature and all human institutions would show a monotony as of the desert sand. There would be no call for classification. Heredity and tradition allow of the accumulation of organic or societal variations in this or that direction, under repeated selection extending over generations.

In short, what one can say of the general effects of heredity in the organic realm he can say of tradition in the range of the folkways. That the transmission is in the one case by way of one set of organs, and in the other by way of another set, is of small moment in comparison with the essential identity in the functions discharged.

Tradition is, in a sense and if such comparison were profitable, more conservative than heredity; there is in the content of tradition an invariability which could not exist if it were the product of a dual composite, such as the germ-plasm. However this may be, tradition always looks to the mores as constituting the matter to be transmitted; and the mores are singularly stereotyped: "uniform, universal in a group, imperative, and invariable," except over long periods. "If asked why they act in a certain way in certain cases, primitive people always answer that it is because they and their ancestors always have done so." ¹

Proverbs and other less concentrated forms of folk-wisdom, once tested and found good — and never, it should be added, to be set

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 2.

aside without examination, as foolish or childish — constitute the primitive mode of accumulation of experience. For example, the Yorubas, “have an extraordinary number of proverbial sayings and regard a knowledge of them as a proof of great wisdom, whence the saying, ‘A counsellor who understands proverbs soon sets matters right.’ They are in constant use, and another saying runs, ‘A proverb is the horse of conversation. When the conversation droops a proverb revives it. Proverbs and conversation follow each other.’”¹

Thus the transmission of the mores comes to be a process embodying stalwart conservatism and small likelihood of change. This situation represents an adaptation of society to life-conditions; tradition is not all bad; because of the random rapidity with which variations succeed one another, there is need of an intensely conservative force (and tradition is all of that) to preserve a certain balance and poise in the evolutionary movement.

AGENCIES OF TRANSMISSION

Transmission of the mores takes place through the agency of imitation or of inculcation; through one or the other according as the initiative in transmitting is taken by the receiving or the giving party respectively. The imitator receives willingly or unconsciously; the inculcator insists upon giving, even if the receiver is reluctant. Inculcation includes a good part of education, and that more familiar term might be used except that it has come to have too many meanings, so that the broader and more colorless designation is chosen. “Acculturation” is a special name for the process by which one group or people

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, § 1; Ellis, A. B., *Yoruba-Speaking Peoples*, p. 218.

learns from another, whether the culture or civilization be transmuted by imitation or by inculcation. As such borrowing implies contact, acculturation is sometimes ascribed to "contagion." An illustration is the spread of a language. The term "diffusion" also is in common use.

This is a convenient point to introduce the sharp distinction between acculturation and "parallelism." Parallelisms are fine cases of similar adaptations to similar conditions; they occur where groups which could not have been in contact allowing of acculturation display identical or closely similar societal forms. It is, of course, easier to say forthwith that group A must have given group B such and such societal forms through such and such probable or possible means of transmission or diffusion than it is painfully to investigate cases of similarity, compare the circumstances under which they occur, rigidly exclude clever guesswork as to the means of transmission, and develop the argument along the line of evolutionary adjustment. In the present chapter no account is to be rendered of parallelism, which belongs under adaptation.¹

Imitation and inculcation are of very unequal effectiveness. In the latter, which is a positive, conscious, deliberate form of transmission, the aim is to pass over to the recipient all the "good" mores; while imitation unconsciously transmits all the mores, even those about to be eliminated as inexpedient or "bad." The boy has his father's virtues held before him that he may acquire them; meanwhile he quickly and almost

¹ Chs. IX-XI below.

unconsciously imitates his ideal in other respects. He learns to swear, perhaps, or to smoke. The subject race is to be lifted up by the laborious and painful inculcation of selected European mores; in the meantime it acquires through imitation, easily and with gusto, the vices peculiar to civilization. It is plainly to be seen that of the two forms of tradition, or transmission of the mores, imitation is by far the more effective, natural, and elemental; compared with it the other agency is artificial and late of development. In fact, inculcation fills in transmission something of the position that "reasoning" holds in selection: it represents the inmixture of the human mind, acting consciously and with some end in view. Education is gravid with theory and its aims vary from time to time; imitation, being unconscious, has no theory or aims to pursue or to alter, and so goes its course with the steady, consistent, and relentless urge of a natural force. Education or inculcation of the mores implies, in short, an antecedent display of conscious selection among the mores, to fix upon what shall be transmitted, as "good"; and so its programs are open to all the misgivings which, as has been seen, cluster about all such programs of selection. They abundantly justify those misgivings, especially in the hands of self-proclaimed experts. Educational programs are a-drip with a pretentious and arrogant unintelligence that seems to hypnotize otherwise level-headed people.

It is noteworthy that not everything is imitation that looks so to be, on the face of it. It is sometimes a reluctant yielding to social pressure, exerted in its typical impersonal style. A pair of illustrations will carry the point. A family is agreed on the expediency

of daylight-saving. The rest of the people of the community live by standard time. Presently the first family gives up and conforms. This is not imitation; it is resignation. The inconveniences of nonconformity, which no one is trying to impose, are too great. Again, a family does not own an automobile. But the competition of the private car has driven public conveyances out of the field or shortened their schedules, to the inconvenience of the non-owner of a private vehicle. The automobile has permitted the residence of his friends in places at a distance and inaccessible to the trolley. These friends are always kindly picking him up and making him feel like a proletarian. Acquaintances are politely surprised when they learn that he is not the possessor of personal transportation facilities; it strikes them as a trifle queer, though not so queer, probably, as it would be if he had no trousers. One would think that anybody would have such necessities to polite living. And so on. Presently the gentleman in question yields to the inevitable and falls into step. Such cases are far from imitation; they illustrate rather the stress toward conformity that is automatically imposed upon one who lives in society.

It is always useful to consider societal processes in comparison with the natural ones, for this renders the conception of the former more objective. Thus, while transmission of organic characters is always from parents to progeny, from the older generation to the younger, in the case of the mores this does not hold. Education generally has reference to transmission with the younger as recipients, and the faculty of imitation is undoubtedly stronger and is exercised to a greater degree by the young; but there are, none the less, many cases of transmission in the reverse direction, where, for instance, parents learn from their children — as many elderly foreigners in this country have learned “Americanism”; and acculturation within and between groups of the mature is com-

mon. Classes within a society learn from one another, and so do nations. Thus arise in societal evolution complications not represented within the organic range. Inter-class transmission naturally meets fewer obstacles than the international type; for the checks upon transmission, such as ethnocentrism,¹ are strongest as between states or nations.

The strange novelty encountered abroad is often at first scorned; only upon nearer acquaintance is it tolerated and, at length, when its merits are perceived, adopted. Characteristics of nationality have been primarily obstacles to acculturation because they have been an offense or, at least, a laughing-stock, to other nations. Group-vanity has then led to stronger affirmation and intensification of these differences. As in the case of class-amalgamation, they must fall before much transfer of culture can take place.

Language is a mark of difference, often the sharpest expression of the individuality of a group. Whenever subdivision of a society occurs, as where parts of it occupy separate valleys, islands, banks of a river, or separate villages with little intercourse between them, the language which they once spoke in common tends to break up into dialects upon which their speakers insist. In many a great civilized state, the population is rent by internal strife over the maintenance of the remnants of other and older tongues, such as the Gaelic, which isolate those who know no other from the current of modern civilization — a strife which is nourished by group-vanity.

As language is the very means of transmission,

¹ Pp. 99 ff., above.

linguistic difference is one of the very strongest of all barriers to acculturation. Intercourse, communication, and literature offset the tendency to differentiation and maintain uniformity of language through a large population and over a diversified area, as in the case of English, but local usage, pronunciation, and accent still show departures. Not all Englishmen admire the, to Americans, highly affected "Oxford accent." To a certain extent, the moving picture, going straight to the eye, obviates the use of language, where the radio calls strongly for a common tongue. There are three great languages spoken in the present civilized culture-area, with at least two others in the second class. They must be learned by a well-educated man at great expenditure of time and labor, for which there is no direct return at all. If this obstacle did not exist, the sense and value of the culture-area would at once be enormously enhanced.

Other differences in the mores, especially in religion, also act as an obstacle to acculturation. Every group, sub-group, class, and other subdivision cleaves to its own mores, disliking those of other groups. It is necessary to recall only, for illustration, the satirical descriptions by foreigners of the mores of any great civilized state of the present. The mores of Spanish-Americans and Anglo-Americans are in strong antipathy to each other. Those of Europeans and Asiatics are fundamentally diverse. Those of Englishmen and Americans are unsympathetic each to the other, at least partially, unless years of foreign residence have overcome the feeling. Just as master and servant in the same house have different ways, and each dislikes the

other's, though they have to put up with them, so is it with societies. Modern means of transportation and communication have greatly modified these antagonisms throughout the civilized culture-area, but they exist still even there, and elsewhere they are very strong. Christians and Mohammedans cannot affiliate. The dislike of the Jews has been due somewhat to envy, but chiefly to the fact that they had other mores than those of the people amongst whom they have lived, and have clung to them, as a people chosen and apart. As they conform to the code of their neighbors, the dislike lessens.

It might seem that religious difference was the cause of such antipathy, but it is not the whole story, by any means. A man brought up as an aristocrat would hate just as intensely the mores of American democracy, or the American democrat those of Russian autocracy or English aristocracy. Antipathy exists between the mores of the educated and the uneducated, of the leisure class and the laborers, of the rural and the city population. It is the mores which are the societal barrier and the obstacle to the transmission of the mores, including the gains of culture. Yet no group or class or sect has in its possession and practice those mores which alone would be best for all, in spite of the vehement assertions which each makes to the contrary.

ORDER OF TRANSMISSION

There are certain of the mores whose acquisition is conditioned by physical development. Language, for example, is delayed until the organs of speech are ready to undertake the task; and the sex-mores lay but light

hold upon the boy or girl until the period of puberty, with its subtle awakenings, is at hand. Illustrations of this kind exhibit anew the conditioning of the social by the physical. In general, certain of the mores are taken on before others. The child can be set down as belonging to a certain nationality, a certain class, a certain family, before its individual characters appear firmly settled. One is reminded of the order in nature, where in ontogenesis there emerge in sequence the characteristics of the class, order, family, genus, species, and so on. If the immature are viewed as age-groups, their course of development can be seen to pass through phases roughly recalling those distinguished in the history of the race. It is often said that children are primitive — indeed, that they are small animals or savages; and the prosecution of the study of primitive peoples has led scientists to aver that savages are beings with the bodies of adults and the characters of children. The child of the adult phase of the race reproduces the adult of the childhood of the race. This is an interesting and useful principle. Certainly the way to understand either type of child is not by reading our own more sophisticated ideas into their minds but by an objective study of their juvenile ways.

The infant starts with his hereditary qualities, but with no mores at all — with no more sense of propriety than an animal could have. “Natural” reactions upon environment lead to the display of unbridled emotions — towering rages, for instance, and violence no less murderous for being impotent — which the mores forbid inasmuch as indulgence in them has turned out to be prejudicial to the societal interest. There is a natural

disregard of "mine and thine" which, in the absence of discipline, that is, arbitrary enforcement of the mores, persists for an indefinite period. Later, the lying and thieving propensities, at first regarded by doting parents as mere romancing or cuteness — and no internal monitor can exist to check them, since they lead, apparently, to the satisfaction of the individual interest — come into collision with the rules of living in society; and they are then done away with or modified from their crudest form of expression. Among small children, left to themselves, as among savages, force is the only title to property; and well up toward "years of discretion" the rule is that of the strongest. Of religion there is none, or it is of the low order of excitement and fear. Taste is crude and undeveloped. It is said that children, prone to the primitive, should not be too much in contact with primitive minds. Affection for children lends interest to the undeveloped stage; but much of the amusement and diversion derived from them lies in the incongruity of their actions and motives with those prescribed by the societal standards. As an important weapon of the past, like the bow and arrow, having lost its consequence, descends to be a plaything, so have social habitudes, now superseded, come to cater to the tastes of childhood. Witness the primitive and even savage nature of certain of the tales of which childhood never tires. Why should they not appeal to the child of all ages, as they did to the childhood of the race? They are simple, direct, graphic, and concrete. They are pictures, not sex-stories, or psychological analyses, or vague yearnings after absorption into an over-soul. Their characters eat lustily, fight, kill

people, are obviously funny. Any child, big or little, now or ten thousand years ago, can understand and sympathize; in fact, there are not a few grown-ups who can lose themselves at any time, or at least under recurring moods, in the fancies of the elder ages. There is a lure to the primitive.

One can see in the case little or much of recapitulation in proportion to the development, in his make-up, of critical spirit as against imagination. But it is undeniable that some of the mores are learned before others, and that, in general, the earliest learned are those earliest acquired by the race, and the latest learned those latest acquired. The societal life from birth to maturity (that is, up to the development of an independent individuality as a member of society) of the younger generation, taken as a whole, is a rough and imperfect summary of the societal evolution of the race from the stage where the mores came into being on up to the present.

Of certain tribes in Assam, India, it is reported¹ that there is from childhood to marriage the most complete and recognized sex liberty; that morals begin with marriage, after which infidelity, the author thinks, is rare. When the opportunity to marry presents itself, if they have the inclination, they pair off and settle down, going through some public wedding ceremony. "Thus the individuals epitomize their own race history. The 'marriage' comes as a restriction on complete sexual liberty." Many another survival in culture-history similarly epitomizes the past of the race.

¹ Peal, S. E., "The 'Morong' as a Possible Relic of Pre-Marriage Communism," in *Journal of the Anthropological Institute of Great Britain & Ireland*, XXII, 248 ff.

EDUCATION

Within the primitive group, children attain to the type of their elders' mores even if there is no deliberate education. What occurs as societal evolution proceeds is an accumulation of societal adjustments in the mores, constituting a development of civilization; and it is through this accumulation that the status of the group is maintained or rises. To this end, it is needful that the attention of the rising generation shall be drawn toward whatever mores are regarded as most important for well-being, that is, toward the prosperity-policy of the group. This is education: conscious and deliberate inculcation. One of the essential functions of education is to create appetites, or wants. But wants are what first summoned the mores into being,¹ and they are what impel the individual or the race toward self-realization.

Education among primitives consists in so disposing of the young that they shall have before them that which it is desirable to imitate: the boys are thrown with the men, the girls with the women, and they thus have held before them the respective types of sex-mores. The group in its natural division is the head school-master; whatever other agencies there are, the society itself always has a dominant voice in this matter.² The home is at its best a sort of preparatory school, where the penalties for infringement of the mores can be tempered; but at length the child outgrows this school, and it is found that he will learn at the hands

¹ Pp. 59 ff., above.

² Todd, A. J., *The Primitive Family as an Educational Agency*.

of his fellows what it is next to impossible to inculcate otherwise. So the final test of adaptation to the societal type and the heavy finishing strokes are given by the real author and guarantor of the mores, the society as a whole. With the proper home discipline and training, the young may escape many of the chastisements of this relentless disciplinarian whom we currently refer to as "The World" — by which we mean public opinion measuring up the human product against the mores.

In the most primitive form of education, where life is far from complex, voluntary imitation is the predominant factor in tradition. The mores are of a form approaching direct reaction on environment and so are readily tested. Many of them are easily proved to be expedient through accidental or careless deviation from their prescriptions; the boy who neglects to observe the example of his elders when hunting is speedily corrected through physical hurt or hunger. Even to a very feeble intellect, the advisability of the prescribed silence during the chase appears unquestionable because its expediency is plainly and concretely demonstrable. This is one of the reasons why the accounts of the education of savage children so astonish us; though there are few blows or harsh words, the young are docile, showing great respect for their models, the elders. Nature imposes the discipline and penalty, and so the young come to believe in their teachers and their precepts. They see the use of them.¹ Inculcation results in adaptations whose expediency is self-evident. Then the youth are put through a fear-

¹ Lippert, *Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit*, I, 226.

some test, in the form of initiation,¹ before they are accepted as full-fledged members of society and allowed to marry. At this time they are told the secret tribal wisdom, and it is literally pounded into them. Further, the young do not dare question the authority of the mores, because of the traditional fear of their ghostly sanction.

To illustrate the efficiency of the religious sanction of the mores, as resting on tradition and as endangered by education, the following quotation challenges reflection. "The proprietor of a village in the Konkan, while deprecating the action of Government in withholding support from the higher education in the country, was on his own part doing everything in his power to thwart the spread of primary education among the peasantry of his village. On being asked why he delighted in keeping the peasantry in ignorance, he observed that it was a great blessing to him and other respectable members of the village that the peasantry were left uneducated and engrossed in superstition. 'At present,' he says, 'I am not obliged to undergo the expense of keeping men to watch my fields and my mango trees, because the village god does the duty for me either without any remuneration or at the cost of a fowl or a cocoa-nut. But once the peasants are educated and made to believe that the great Gramadev, of whom they are so much now in awe, is nothing more than a block of stone capable of doing neither good nor evil, thefts and impudence will increase in the village, and there will be no end to my troubles.'"²

What makes the education of the modern child so hard is the distance and indirectness of attainment of recognizable results, and so the difficulty of correctly testing the process; likewise the absence of sanctions of an awe-inspiring order. If a boy had seen a companion lose his life because he did not know a paradigm,

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, ch. XVII.

² Joshi, P. B., "Household and Village Gods," in the *Journal of the Anthropological Society of Bombay*, II, 206.

or was sure he would be damned if he could not demonstrate a proposition, the status and repute of education would forthwith rise in his estimation. Fancy the zeal with which astronomy would be studied if astrological beliefs were current !

As long as the rising generation can proceed at once to test the validity of the mores on the criterion of whether they work, so long do they accept the transmitted ways with all docility. But when what they are to have inculcated in them has been laid down by minds more experienced, far-sighted, and subtle than their own, and they neither see the demonstration of resulting expediency made in terms they cannot misunderstand nor yet have much trust in their instructors, docility is not natural. Still worse is it if they know that educators are themselves in violent dispute over the value of what is taught — if they see them rushing on an impulse to imitate systems adjusted to other conditions — German, English, French, Papuan ; they cannot then, even though well intentioned, be more than half-hearted.

There is none of this in the early stages, for the code is the code, and all serenely, unshakenly, and unthinkingly adhere to it as a matter of course. Nor is there much of it nowadays in the case of certain studies. The value of the “three R’s” is seldom questioned even among those ignorant of them. Tests of a concrete order lie all about. It is, as a matter of fact, unquestionable that a distrustful attitude toward “higher education” has some reason in it, especially in view of the assumption that a higher education is the right of all.

There are not lacking serious students ¹ who believe that mass education can be too high for societal expediency. There has been considerable doubt expressed as to the advisability of providing opportunities for higher education for the hordes of American youth who, since the late war, have flocked to the colleges; it has been asserted that this has resulted in an unwillingness to occupy other than "white-collar jobs"; and that the consequent misfits are a detriment to social well-being.

By one who questions the practical utility of enlightenment the question may be raised as to "whether it is folly to teach wisdom where ignorance is bliss. Those who believe that the attainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain is of the highest significance in this world will tell us that it were better to accept even necromancy than to lose the opportunity to relieve human suffering. There are those, on the other hand, who feel that there are other more important ends than the hedonistic, that the greatest nobility of character cannot be gained so long as men fail to face the facts of life as they understand them, that in the long run it will be to the advantage of the race to risk the continuance of some suffering among weaklings whom the arts of magic alone can relieve, rather than to curtail the development of clear thinking and rational activity among the common people." ² This view of the matter suggests reflection upon a pronouncement, ³ accompanied by illustrations, that "the ultimate aims of

¹ Duff, J. F., "Mass Intelligence Called High Enough," in *N. Y. Times* (April 11, 1926).

² H. R. M., in *The Nation* (N. Y., June 25, 1908).

³ Gumpłowicz, L., *Sociologie und Politik*, p. 110.

idealism are always rational, only its ways and means are irrational.”

Inculcation can be overdone; there is such a thing as being over-educated for one's capacity, if not for his walk in life. By the use of coercion and under the mirage of theories and ideals, lofty indeed, but not, for all that, verifiable as to their results, individuals or groups can be led to acquire a “higher” education, to the advantage neither of society nor of themselves. This is one of the results of the entrance of the human mind into the process of evolution.

To devote educational attention and money, on the other hand, merely to the few supposedly élite, granted that there were some criterion by which they could be identified beforehand — a criterion which Ostwald,¹ with all his experience, could not name — is about equivalent to planning an army solely of generals. Even the great man needs a comprehending audience. If he has an idea, it gets nowhere until it secures a consensus. The public may have no way of estimating it, even if they are willing to bother with it at all. There is a prime necessity for a general level of information and culture, from the vantage-point of which the great man can be appreciated. It is a fact, also, that the geniuses do not need attention, as compared with the so-called “common man.” For any society, it is better to lift the general level even slightly than to try to boost exceptional youths — even if, be it repeated, we knew how in advance to identify the exceptional — to the tree-tops.

Education as a phase of transmission of the mores

¹ *Grosse Männer.*

is capable of extended and intensive development. Though often in application a sorry affair, the program of education represents the greatest systematic attempt to put reasoned selection into operation that the world has seen. It always represents, moreover, the reflection of the existing social status, resting solidly upon the existing economic status but played about by the popular philosophy of the time. The root idea of education cannot be anything else than to raise up the rising generation to play its part, with the greatest satisfaction in its own self-realization, in the societal environment and within the societal code of its time — to train the young to knowledge of the game of living in society by learning its rules. The future adults are put in the way of attaining what is thought worth while according to the views held under the existing mores. For the young in their inexperience there is performed an act of selection in the mores — a selection purporting, at least, to be rational — by which they are to profit.

When it is realized that they have no extended fixed code, but are impressionable in a very high degree, and that their interests are but accumulating and are not yet mature enough to guide them in their own selection, then the exceeding importance of making a good selection for them becomes apparent and, indeed, overpowering. It becomes a culpable thing to take the eye from the beneficiaries and their destiny and fix all attention upon advancement of the profession of educator, or, still worse, upon petty personal vanity and private ends. Good teaching demands self-abnegation ; for its very essence, when it is followed

truly, consists in straining all the powers to serve discerningly, judiciously, and unobtrusively those who are not yet ready to mark out their own destiny. Fortunately for the race's interests this profession has always harbored a number of devoted, unselfish, forgotten souls. It is not the teacher who has brought education into disrepute; it is mainly the active ignoramus, who masks incapacity under sententiousness in instructing the long-suffering teacher how he must teach. The classroom teacher must often repudiate his own better judgment in favor of the whims of educational "experts," in order to get a job in the first place, and then to hold it. Not the job-tenders but the jobbery is the main maladjustment in education.¹

"Education is one of the most painful, delicate, and private operations in the world, and to suppose that it can be generally applied by some magic formula is to suppose we are living in Utopia."²

By education there can be passed on an accumulation of tested folk-experience, so that the oncoming generation, as one keen-witted student put it on an examination-paper, "does not have to get an answer to past questions, but may spend its effort in seeking to answer the next question."

The oncoming generation, as we know, once took over the mores in a more worshipful imitation or docile acceptance of the wisdom of their elders. At present, youth seems to feel that most of the mores, as presented to them by these elders, are no more than a set of empirical variations for them lightly to pass upon, accepting

¹ "Maladjusted Teachers," letter in *N. Y. Times* (Sept. 11, 1931), incited by a preceding letter of protest and an editorial.

² Jones, H. M., "The Forgotten Professor," in *Yale Review*, XX, 786.

or discarding according to the promptings of some inner monitor. They are grown impatient of merely receiving, and yearn to exercise not only the selective but also the originaive function. They have always had something of the latter, for variation is a character of youth rather than of age; now, though, there is a widespread conviction abroad, supported by writers who see their own interest in catering to it, that nothing is good if not radical and more or less shocking to tradition. Mere children regard parental views as ludicrously antiquated and wish to issue into the world as arbiters of a new dispensation where there shall be no "repression." They are liberal, radical, and "red." They lack reverence for authority, which, indeed, has often been overvalued, and also reticence, which has not. This is because they have missed the discipline which nature and the habit of preceding ages imposed upon their predecessors — a misfortune to those of the present day and to society, due to the softening process previously alluded to as a sequel of success in the development of material culture.

This situation is natural enough, even though it is deplorable that human beings, of whatever age, should ignore the value of individual or racial experience. To be noted, however, is the fact that the validity of the primary maintenance-ways remains unquestioned; the newcomers are glad enough to profit by what the past has to offer along those lines. The objects of their scorn are the property-system, government, marriage and the family, the defects of which are to them evident at a glance. Neither they nor those who flatter them have earned the right to an opinion by faithful study of the course of any one of these institutions. Their strictures are not intelligent but capricious and emotional, often no more than the self-assertion of uninformed vanity. They want to tear things down to the ground so as to rebuild to the heart's desire, and are impatient of the counsel to deliberation. It would sometimes seem that they regard the longstanding institutions of society as no more than unhappy ideas, conceived, like their own happy ones, by sheer heat of the mind. There is no corrective of such imaginings except through the realization that these institutions, by the very fact that they have through untold ages weathered many a selection, must have some sense in them, perceivable by attentive study of their evolution; and that, in any case, they are tough and

knotty enough not to be reshaped over night at the hand of inexperience.¹

It is part of the evolutionary process on the societal plane that the mores shall be ever under question, and not alone by those who know something of their nature; I, for one, like the honesty and fearlessness of the modern collegian; but it is one of the marring defects of education that it does so little to set its beneficiaries right upon the principle that criticism has no validity or place in court when it is either captious or uninformed. Teaching people "to think straight" sounds well; but there must be a factual basis for thought, or it is like a liner without ballast, its propeller churning thin air. Information and study are the only basis for respectable thinking.

INTER-CLASS AND INTER-SOCIETY TRANSMISSION

This case of transmission between generations within the same society has been taken up first because it is simpler; for between the two parties to it there are few of those barriers, such as language, that exist between classes or nations. Where there is resistance, it is less serious. Acculturation between classes within a group (intra-group) or between groups (inter-group) encounters barriers due to "class-consciousness" or to a wider ethnocentrism; but it always proceeds through imitation and inculcation, the latter represented by missionary enterprise of various description. These two types of acculturation or transmission differ in degree only, not in kind, and may be considered in conjunction. Though inter-group transmission, as between two nations or races, has more natural barriers in its way, and higher ones, than the other type, yet there are cases where classes in different nations have

¹ Sumner, W. G., "On the Absurd Effort to Make the World Over," in *Collected Essays*, I ("War and Other Essays"), pp. 195 ff.

common interests — in communism, for example — which make them more congenial than different classes in the same nation.

Classes, despite the fact that they are in competition in the “class-struggle,” acquire mores from one another, and so do nations. Generally it is the “lower” that receives from the “higher,” but not always; in the construction of the Romance languages, low Latin has prevailed over the classical tongue, and even the negro slave has transmitted some of his folkways to the unconsciously imitative; for instance, from nurse to child. The white man, who has been copied by the Indian, has, in turn, taken over Indian words, foods, methods — has “Indianized” when living in close contact with the natives on the frontier. So marked a human propensity is this imitation that some authors ¹ have seen it as the central factor in the evolution of civilization and have sought to formulate its laws. It is to be seen that if an adjustment new to a set of men is presented to them as the result of contact with aliens, that revelation amounts, for them, to the appearance in the field of a variation which becomes subject to selection, automatic or in some degree conscious. It was sensible enough of the white man, for instance, to adopt the Eskimo dress in an arctic environment.

Imitation appears well down in the organic world, and is conspicuous in the life of those animals which are nearest to man in the scale. The ape has given his name to a verb signifying “to imitate.” It is difficult to draw any line of distinction between the highest animal form

¹ Tarde, G., *Lois d'Imitation*; Ross, E. A., *Social Psychology*.

of imitation and the lowest human types, those shown by minds undeveloped because of tender age or retardation. Here is yet another of those blurred zones of transition, common along the path of evolution, and effective to render indistinct all boundary-lines between its grades. Imitation is present in the concurrence as a result of which folkways form and acculturation begins; and no very great mental activity was necessary to secure such concurrence — only the ability to distinguish between pleasure and pain. These primal mental operations were empirical, chaotic, and unreliable; correctness of conclusion came, in certain classes of cases, from the fact that convincing tests lay everywhere and unavoidable in the conditions of a rude life. Genuine, verified knowledge was not yet in the mental outfit any more than it is in that of children; and its absence left imitation indiscriminating. A more effective tool might be invented or brought in from outside and then imitated to the real advantage of the imitators; but then, too, adoption of the irrational, as in the use of fire to exorcise ghosts, was just as likely; and some coincidental chance or mischance following such action was quite as clear a demonstration, on that uncritical stage, as the observed superior efficiency of the tool could be. At that time, men were wont — as, indeed, they still are — to confuse temporal with causal sequences; to conclude that because one thing followed another in time, it was the result of that other. Convictions reached by this *post hoc* method were quite as unshaken as those arrived at by what would seem to us a flawless proof. There was a general chaos except where the knock-down

logic of facts forced a certain common sense. Along the lines of concrete material interest, recognition of the superior values of others' mores, among primitive people as in children, is not seldom keen; but elsewhere cases are vague and scattering. The mores run out into ritual,¹ and the ritual, being supported by ethnocentric and religious sanction, becomes stereotyped and unchanging except by the automatic process.

There is less of inter-group transmission between primitive tribes by reason of their isolation, which is, in addition, unfavorable to receptiveness; and so transmission goes on, for the most part, through the transfer of the same in-group code from one generation to another. There is certainly no attempt at inculcation between groups; whatever there is stops at imitation. This is perhaps the perfection of imitation as a machine-like agency for keeping succeeding generations to the type of former ones. The very word "tradition" is synonymous with negation of change and "progress." We know from former pages that, in the absence of variation, competition, and selection, tradition, like heredity in the organic range, tends to singleness of type and to monotony.

War breaks down this isolation, especially when it issues in the capture of wives and of goods. The women carry the mores of their homes into their captivity, and much can be learned from inspection of unfamiliar tools, gear, and property in general. Eventually war results also in slavery, which transfers both men and women into the conquerors' society,

¹ Sumner, W. G., *Folkways*, §§ 67-68.

with the result of that amalgamation of the mores of which, as some account of it has been given already,¹ not much need here be recounted. When there are several social strata in a society, transmission between them becomes an intra-group affair. These strata, or classes, are characterized by differing codes of mores. Some of them seem to be succeeding in life, to be escaping misery or even to be securing obvious material advantages to which the others have not attained. Comparison of class-destiny, to judge by the perennial class-dissatisfaction, was a very early development. Imitation of the ways of the envied is the natural sequel. Thus the great and powerful, including, then as now, the rich, have come to some extent, as we have seen, to set fashions in conduct of all kinds. Vanity, vulnerable to and fearing ridicule, powerfully strengthens this tendency. Variations in the mores of the prominent may attain to an extension unwarranted by their intrinsic importance, as judged by the outcome; and part of the mores of the upper classes of one generation or age may be infused into the mores of the lower classes in the next. Here is where there is some chance for the better educated part of the society to effect alteration of the mores. But it should be kept in mind that the moving factor producing receptiveness to acculturation, and so allowing of the free action of imitation all through the body of the mores, is change in the maintenance-mores. Imitation as between classes is no more than superficial unless it rests upon a growing approximation of economic conditions and habitudes. However, as there lie in the way of imita-

¹ Pp. 120 ff., above,

tion of the economic mores fewer barriers of serious nature than elsewhere, imitation of them may operate indirectly upon the rest of the mores and has so done in history, with great effect.

Ruskin's catalogue of "sure good" consisted "first, in feeding people, then in dressing people, then in lodging people and, lastly, in rightly pleasing people with arts and sciences or any other subject of thought."¹

Similar conclusions are reached when the case of inter-group or inter-racial transmission is considered. The imitation of a "higher" race's mores by a "lower," where it is not a superficial one, is generally confined to those of a more material order. "The South American natives, when once they have seen a steel axe, feel in the most positive manner the superiority of it to their own stone axes. The savage seems to feel himself driven to the wall by the superiority of the civilized man in respect to tools, of which this is the prime instance."² Vanity may lead to the adoption of the clothing and some of the other externals of the more advanced by the less; the outer forms of religion may be taken over and accommodated to the essence of the old religious beliefs. In many historic cases, the would-be religious benefactors have not even taken the trouble to find out the nature of that which they wished to replace. "It is not easy to learn from men and women of our own kin and kind just what are their beliefs concerning religion, and what we term superstition. If this is true among civilized people, whose language we speak, whose education and whose

¹ "A Workingmen's College," in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 15, 1926).

² Von den Steinen, K., *Zentral-Brasilien*, p. 71.

experiences are essentially our own, it is obviously much more difficult to determine the beliefs of an alien race, speaking an unknown tongue, and with a wholly different inheritance, training, and viewpoint.”¹

“Experience shows that primitive religious beliefs are practically indestructible, except by the destruction of the race in which they are ingrained.”²

Realization of such truth has sometimes replaced with more practical qualities the mere enthusiasm, fanaticism, and good will of the missionary. The Jesuits used to teach the Paraguay Indians merely to patter prayers by rote;³ now stress is upon the medical and industrial rather than the doctrinal.⁴ Natives are to be taught, first, how to live better and, second, how to get a better living. Medical missions aim to alter the conditions of life, industrial missions to alter the maintenance-mores. For reasons now familiar, imitation is more easily secured within such ranges and, since imitation along other lines is likely to be irrational — say, in adopting palmistry as readily as chemistry — inculcation tries to direct it toward what is, to the mind of the inculcator, surest to bring about expedient general acculturation. Conviction seems to have been slowly gathering that it is better to commence with an objective foundation instead of trying to prop up a doctrinal roof on stilts.

It is natural enough to slip over from imitation into

¹ Grinnell, G. B., *The Cheyenne Indians*, II, 87.

² Smith, W. R., *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 355-356.

³ Watson, R. G., *Spanish and Portuguese South America during the Colonial Period*, I, 272.

⁴ “Colonial Doctors Aid Culture’s Spread,” in *N. Y. Times* (March 22, 1927).

inculcation, and inspection of the former, unconscious process should provide a key to the understanding of how to put the latter into practice. In educating the young, the idea, when it contains sense, is to equip them with the best code to enable them to fit the position in life which they are presumably to occupy in the future. There is here some room for hope that they may rise above the level of the standard of living of their birth-group; it is as desirable to incite in them all aspirations toward what they may attain as it is unwise to instill within them vague and restless yearnings for the impossible or highly improbable. Youth is elastic and adaptable, and it is perhaps just as well to set for it an aim slightly beyond the probable. When, however, it becomes a question of "elevating" classes and races, discretion and modesty of expectation must guide any expedient policy.

The use of such a term as "elevate" is usually pure ethnocentrism. Turkey "has the advantage of possessing a code of morals which produces so high a standard of right conduct in private life that very little in the way of moral lessons will have to be learned by the Ottoman from Western civilization."¹

Granted that the intent of the proposed "uplifters" is honest, what can they expect as results? To ask what they do expect would be to require a voluminous list of some of the chief chimæras and vagaries of history. Perhaps a better question would be: How is it possible to get results at all? The answer comes directly out of our antecedent discussion about selection. The body of the mores tends to consist with the

¹ *The Nation* (N. Y., Nov. 1, 1911).

maintenance-mores of the class or race in question. It thus reflects the status of the struggle for existence and for a standard of living, that is, the status of the relation between environment and the immediate reactions upon it.¹ Manifestly, if this is true, the point of attack should be either along the line of altering the environment (so that different reactions will be evoked, as in the improvement of the living-conditions of the poor or sanitation in the tropics²) or in deftly hastening a lagging adaptation of the maintenance-mores to existent conditions. The former alternative represents a formidable task; the latter means that the uplifting agency shall formulate, for the proposed beneficiaries, a program of rational selection in their mores and then force or persuade them to adopt it. In that process great damage may be done by mistakes; and there is here more likelihood of error than in the training of the young. The latter are presumably being educated up into a set of mores, which, since they are our own, we may be assumed to know more about, both as to their nature and the conditions with which they correspond; but when it comes to uplifting another class or race, we can possess no such intimate knowledge. This question of the possibility or advisability of trying to transmit our mores, as being the 'best' — of trying to exercise selection for a group more or less alien to us — hinges largely upon an understanding of adaptation in the mores. In general, be it reiterated, the effective place to take hold scientifically in attempting selection

¹ P. 225.

² Gorgas, W. C., *Sanitation in Panama*, reviewed under the caption: "A Triumph of American Science," in the *Nation*, CI, 231 (N. Y., Aug. 19, 1915).

is at the bottom, with the mores whose adequacy is most quickly and convincingly tested. Imitation being really due to the perception, mistaken or otherwise, of the pertinence of that which is imitated to the conditions of life, will then ensue.

Inculcation in all its forms rests ultimately upon imitation, which is the dominant means of transmission of the mores; it is really, in good part, an effort to induce or force imitation; it is a deliberate attempt to pass something on to a prospective, willing or reluctant or resisting, recipient.

THE CONTACT OF RACES

The story of the contact of races is a long and varied one. The part of it that has to do with the meeting of races far apart on the scale of civilization is not edifying. If it turns out that the souls of the "little brown brothers" and other savages and semi-savages have really been saved, that is about the extent of profit from the general wreckage. Unless natives were protected by their environment, as in the tropics, they have always been in danger of decline and extinction. The Tasmanians are all gone, these fifty years, and of the Australians but few are left. The population of a number of Polynesian islands has been decimated. And even where the climate or other environmental features afforded protection, the natives have been enslaved and cheated, interfered with by officious controllers and missionaries, and generally thrown off their stride. No wonder that pessimism is so regular a characteristic of a group trying to make the transition from a lower to a higher stage of culture that it has

been called, for societies as well as individuals, the "philosophy of half-culture."¹ As one surveys the whole stretch of cultural evolution, he is assailed by the impression that the natives, on the whole, would have been better off if they had been let alone. Even where they have made acquisitions from the white man, their native arts have declined, they have ceased to have the self-respect of those who are working out their own salvation, and have become hangers-on to something not their own.²

They have put up much passive resistance, infuriating to their would-be benefactors, who have succeeded, at best, in modifying certain externals. This is the theme of Kipling's³ well-known stanza:

"Now it is not good for the Christian's health to hustle the Aryan brown,
For the Christian riles and the Aryan smiles, and he weareth the
Christian down;
And the end of the fight is a tombstone white with the name of
the late deceased,
And the epitaph drear: 'A fool lies here who tried to hustle the
East.'"

Where the peoples brought into contact were more nearly on a cultural level, transmission has been genuinely effective. The African, as well as other primitives, has managed to assimilate Arab civilization to a considerable extent, because the gap is not so great; Islam, allowing polygamy, blood-revenge, and other mores of the savage, does not repel and confuse him so

¹ Vierkandt, *Naturvölker und Kulturvölker*, pp. 213 ff.

² The case of the Omahas is rather fully treated by Fletcher and La Flesche, in *Bureau of American Ethnology Report*, XXVII, 614 ff. Summary in Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, I, 56.

³ *Naulahka*, epigraph to ch. V.

much. The Dutch complain that certain natives, having embraced Christianity and finding no further differences between themselves and the Europeans, begin to act as if they were equal to Europeans in all respects.¹ But generally the higher culture, especially developed religion, has had to make all sorts of concessions, sometimes vital ones, in order to secure even lip-adherence.

Japan's dexterous adoption of western civilization is perhaps the most incredible case of transmission in history. Guided by a group of able patriots, the "Elder Statesmen," she seems to have sized up the situation with supreme acuteness and to have adjusted in a highly skillful manner. In 1850, she was a barbarous nation; about half a century later, after she had proved her culture by soundly thrashing China and Russia, she became one of the Great Powers.²

The spread of any type of civilization, Oriental or Occidental, has been, of course, a transmission of the mores; and it has been much more an affair of imitation than one of inculcation. The culture of the Near East spread toward the West automatically rather than through design.

A familiar general principle here emerges. Imitation has, in a number of historic cases, taken place unconsciously and naturally in the maintenance-mores, and has then been followed by an approximation of the "lower" to the "higher" mores all along the line. This is the normal process of acculturation, visible wherever real transmission of culture has taken place.

¹ Wilken, G. A., *Verspreide Geschriften*, I, 101.

² Hearn, L., *Japan: an Interpretation*; Kuroita, K., "How Japan Assimilates Foreign Ideas," in *Japan Magazine*, quoted in *New Haven Journal-Courier* (Nov. 24, 1919); Okuma, Count, "National Mission," a most statesmanlike message, reported in *N. Y. Times* (Oct. 4, 1914).

The undeveloped race has had little difficulty in appreciating and taking over the maintenance-mores, the arts and crafts; here there is verification; things are seen to "work." And then the transmission of these has made inevitable the transfer of the rest.

For example, the Romans never tried to "assimilate" their provinces. All they cared about was the maintenance of their rule. But the provincials, observing the obvious superiorities of the Roman industrial and military organizations, imitated and fell in with these. They then began to see the advantage of the Roman language, Roman laws, and other of the secondary societal forms, and took them over naturally, almost unconsciously, and certainly without much compulsion or exhortation.¹ In general the acculturation which took its course from Chaldæa and Egypt through the Phœnicians, Greeks, Genoese, Venetians, and others forms a grand illustration of the point at issue.² None of these peoples had any mission to uplift western Europe; they were after gain through trade. They operated exclusively in the economic field, introducing first the products, then the processes of the superior arts of the East. And with what result? With that of modifying at length the whole societal structure of the West, by gradually transmitting to it, as it developed a substructure capable of supporting them, the mores of a more advanced civilization.

¹ This case of transmission is worked out briefly, chiefly after F. de Coulanges, by L. de Saussure, *Psychologie de la Colonisation Française dans ses Rapports avec les Sociétés Indigènes*, chapter on "Roman Gaul." See James Bryce's two historical studies: *The Ancient Roman Empire and the British Empire in India*, and *The Diffusion of Roman and English Law throughout the World*.

² This is worked out in some detail in Keller, *Colonization*, ch. II.

Trade has always been the greatest natural carrier of civilization, and before the Age of the Discoveries it operated in isolation from later developed agencies to which, in the time since, much of the influence exerted by commerce has been wrongfully accredited. Trade has remained the "handmaid of civilization," or, better, its forerunner. Trade and the development of communication, that is, the piercing of isolation, have always gone together; and it is precisely this contact of peoples ensuing upon the passing of isolation that allows of tolerance, mutual knowledge, and acculturation through imitation.¹ Commercial activities, however, aim directly at the creation and supply of material wants by suggestion through some form of advertising. Enlisting imitation while missions, for example, have attempted inculcation, they have worked "with the grain," so to speak, where agencies of inculcation have gone against it. They have impinged immediately upon the maintenance-mores, where other agencies have attempted to begin with the secondary societal forms.

A high authority² suggested long ago that the way to eradicate slavery in Africa as he knew it was to better the transportation system; for the only agency for carrying burdens, capable of operating in the narrow paths and tunnels which penetrated the tangle of primæval vegetation, was the human pack-animal. "A single railroad," says Fabri,³ who quotes the keen and clear-headed Scotch-

¹ This contention is presented in an elementary form in Gregory, Keller and Bishop, "Physical and Commercial Geography," ch. XIII; "Russian Peasants Marvel at Planes," in *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 15, 1929).

² Livingstone, who always had an eye to the civilizing effects of trade. See the last chapter of his *Travels in South Africa*.

³ Fabri, F., *Fünf Jahre deutscher Kolonialpolitik*, p. 55. The Governor-general of French Equatorial Africa announces that the use of natives as carriers of merchandise over long distances has been abolished in the colony, thanks to the partial completion of the Congo-French railroad. *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 26, 1929).

man, "is more effective to suppress slave-raids and the slave-trade than a dozen crusades, which would cost thousands of lives and would swallow up millions to just about no use." There was sense in these remarks, as the event is proving. The case shows the advantage of applying effort where it will count.

The Department of Overseas Trade is behind a "Come to Britain" propaganda, which shall bring hosts of paying American tourists. To attract them, it is proposed to cater to their mores very sedulously. "No hotel can claim to rank as first class without central heating. . . . Running water must be provided in every bedroom, and there must be a plentiful supply of bathrooms. Electric reading lights and telephones should be placed by every bed; the electric light switch should be accessible from the bed. Larger wardrobes should be provided, where the visitor can hang his clothes. Traveling Americans like to hang their coats and trousers; they do not fold them up and put them in drawers, as many Englishmen do. . . . Americans are great fruit eaters. Plentiful supplies of fruit should be supplied at all meals. They are fonder of salads than we are; therefore, lettuce, tomatoes, celery, and radishes should be always available in season. The coffee must be stronger and actually taste like the ground berry. . . . The 'Come to Britain' movement might make the Britons indefatigable fruit and vegetable eaters and devoted to modern plumbing."¹ Fascist Italy, under the acute realism of Mussolini, sees in the satisfied and pleased foreign sojourner a national asset of the first order.

It is plain that these cases illustrate adaptation quite as much as transmission. Imitation, being really due in the large to perception, accurate or mistaken, vague or otherwise, of the pertinence of that which is imitated to the conditions of life, cannot be trusted in respect to the secondary societal forms — law, property, religion, etc. — for these do not possess vigor or effectiveness unless they are adapted to those primary forms that belong in the maintenance-mores. Fancy the malad-

¹ "Come to Britain," in *N. Y. Times* (Dec. 19, 1926).

justment and so the ineffectiveness of the governmental system of the United States as existing among the aborigines of Fiji; it would be as superfluous in its complexity in those islands as the Fiji system would be slight and insufficient to discharge the corresponding regulative functions in this country. You cannot discuss any of these factors of evolution without having the end-result, adaptation, in the background all the time. Adjustment is the summing-up, as it were, of the activity of variation, selection, and transmission. We have already been led to infringe somewhat upon the field of adaptation; and the following samples of group-adjustment may be expected to throw back light upon the way already traversed.

CHAPTER IX

ADAPTATION

IF, starting out with the idea that evolution means "progress," one seeks for evidence of "progressive evolution" in the mores, he is likely to wind up his search with the conclusion that progress is to be demonstrated only in the maintenance-range.¹ The great "wonders" of the time are the mechanical inventions and the chemical processes. Everyone agrees that there has been marked progress along such lines, but when it is matter of the rest of the mores, dispute enters forthwith. Sumner² has expressed this impression of the evolutionary process as follows :

"In short, as we go upwards from the arts to the mores and from the mores to the philosophies and ethics, we leave behind us the arena on which natural selection produces progressive evolution out of the close competition of forms some of which are more fit to survive than others, and we come into an arena which has no boundaries and no effective competition. The conflicts are freer and freer and the results of the conflicts less and less decisive. The folkways seem to me like a great restless sea of clouds, in which the

¹ Howard, W. O., "Is Civilization Worth Having?" in *N. Y. Times* (March 16, 1924). The writer admits that "man has wrought miracles of mechanic progress," but, citing war's destructiveness, clashing religions and philosophies, the vices and miseries of the underworld, and other penalties of progress, he asks: "What has he really gained?" He draws depressing pictures of slaughter, misery, hypocrisy, and rascality, and appends to each: "And this man calls civilization!"

² In a fragmentary, unpublished manuscript. See *Note* at end of this volume.

parts are forever rolling, changing, and jostling, as temperature, wind-currents, and electric discharges vary. We may confidently believe that there is not a cloud shape which does not correspond exactly to the play of forces which makes it, and we may be well convinced that no change of form takes place from time to time behind which there is not a change in conditions and forces, but we also know that the cloud shapes do not change in a series of any definable character and that they do not run forward in time towards some ultimate shape, but they change and change, rise and fall, ebb and flow, without any sequence and purpose. If they conform to the conditions and forces from moment to moment, that is the end of their existence. So it is with the folkways and the attendant philosophy and ethics. They conform to the interests which arise in the existing conjuncture, and that is all the sense they have."

It would be a notable exploit to prove that societal evolution is progressive, and toward what, or that it is not progressive — in fact, an incredible one, inasmuch as no preliminary agreement could possibly be secured as to what "progress" is.¹ The question is irrelevant to the present discussion, for what we have undertaken to consider is only this: Is there a process of adjustment in the mores, irrespective of its trend, and, if so, how does it work? To us, evolution is neither progress nor retrogression, exclusively; it is both. "Progress" and "retrogression" are opinions on adjustments which do or do not appeal to one occupying a selected point of view, generally that of his own code. Evolution is adjustment to life-conditions, and that is all it is. That there may be some "end" or "purpose" to the adjustment-process, that it may be "teleological," is here a wholly extraneous matter and one of complete indifference. We are interested solely in the fact of adjustment and in such explanation of its method

¹ P. 15, above.

within the societal range as we can discover. We are interested in the relation of the mores to society's life-conditions, and also to each other, the latter relation being that of consistency.

THE "HISTORIC SENSE"

The text of these last three chapters on adjustment might read: Any firmly settled folkway, mos, or institution of society is expedient in the setting of its time, as an adaptation. If it were not, it would not be there. It will be noted that the folkway is supposed to be a settled one, that is, a tried and preserved variation, of vital import; an upstart fashion or fad is a variation upon which selection has yet to pass, and neither in organic nor in societal evolution is there any reason to look for adaptation in variations prior to selection. Nor can a fading maladjustment be regarded as firmly settled.

By way of a broad consideration bearing upon adaptation, to precede our illustrations, it may be said that the progress of knowledge has led to a revision of opinion concerning the expediency and sense of societal forms in their setting of time and place. In former ages of narrower horizons and small knowledge, when outlying races whom our predecessors were coming to know were seen to have mores diverse from those of the observers and often abhorrent to them, this was laid to perversity, depravity, or some other blameworthy quality. Ethnocentrism exerted a sway so undisputed that, as a corollary to their own self-satisfaction, people believed that if the code of an alien society did not conform to their own, or if their own were not adopted

at sight as self-evidently superior, it was because of willfulness and even wickedness. Many survivals of this attitude yet appear; but on the whole such intolerance has been for some time on the decline. Ignorance, lack of opportunity, and lack of mental, moral, and social development were admitted, even by some Spanish crusaders in the New World, as excuses for native non-receptiveness; and the tendency is growing to seek reasons for what used to be referred to stubbornness and caprice. The study of ethnography and anthropology has contributed powerfully to this change of attitude.

Numerous cases could be assembled to demonstrate the damage done to primitive peoples by forcing or persuading them to give up their peculiar customs.¹ The attempt to repress the Indian custom of self-destitution through the *pollatch* wrought great injury to the natives. Ratzel² describes the Hawaiian system of land-tenure, whereby the tribal rights of ownership went to the chief, the subjects cultivating for him or else giving him the first fruits of every harvest or rendering him compulsory service two days out of seven. He even received a quarter of all the wages earned by his subjects. The people were virtually serfs bound to the soil. The author comments: "A proof that this dependence was patriarchal, and not felt as oppressive, is furnished by the fact that the sudden abolition of it through Christianity has been indicated as one cause of the decrease of the population." A protest against the discontinuance of debt-slavery is recorded.³

This movement toward tolerance affords considerable evidence of a general nature for the recognizable expediency of the mores in their place and time —

¹ Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Contact"; McGee, in *The American Anthropologist*, X, 338 (Oct., 1897).

² *History of Mankind*, I, 284.

³ In Lewin's *Wild Races of Southeast India*, pp. 85-86.

that is, toward the demonstration of adaptation in the mores. For that growing tolerance, which is greatest among the best informed, can be due to one thing only: a recognition, implicit, if not explicit, of the fact that diverse or even offensive mores represent ways, justified by their persistence over other ways, in which men have reacted upon environment in the struggle for life and for self-realization. Men have been in deadly earnest in this struggle and have done the best they could for themselves, dodging and twisting and turning to avoid the pain of maladjustment; they have had no idea of being perverse, but have been preoccupied in the effort to secure greater satisfaction of tangible interests. In assessing their mores, the moral judgment is wholly out of place. Respect for the expediency of the mores of "lower" races increases with acquaintance, for they are not seldom remarkably apt to conditions; and where at first sight they look strange to the alien, they are often found, later, to have in them a great deal of sense, that is, to constitute felicitous adaptation. "The barbaric rouses us no longer and the gross wounds us no more if we regard them as beginnings and necessary transitions." ¹

In this connection we have on record an instructive admission by Darwin himself. Morley had accused him of deficiency in historic spirit as evidenced by certain indignant expressions in the *Descent of Man* about slavery — expressions originating in quick sympathy and in a European point of view, rather than justified by actual fact.

"When, for instance, he speaks of the 'great sin of slavery' having been general among primitive nations, he forgets that though to hold a slave would be a sinful degradation to a European to-day,

¹ Heine, quoted in Wilken, G. A., *Verspreide Geschriften*, I, 444.

the practice of turning prisoners of war into slaves, instead of butchering them, was not a sin at all, but marked a decided improvement in human manners." To this stricture Darwin responds by letter at once: "I believe your criticism is quite just about my deficient historic spirit, for I am aware of my ignorance in this line." He then refers to the *Descent of Man* and continues: "I felt that I was walking on a path unknown to me and full of pitfalls; but I had the advantage of previous discussions by able men."¹ The latter were mainly moral philosophers.

If a man of Darwin's learning, discernment, and scientific spirit is forced to acknowledge such a misjudgment of alien mores, it is indeed a warning to lesser men against a glib and cocksure condemnation of whatever is alien to the spirit and practice of their age. Darwin was out of his field and was really not going behind the pronouncements of the philosophers to the facts. Indeed, he had no facts to speak of. He slipped into the ethnocentric attitude and lost his "historic sense," that is, his perspective of evolution as a series of adaptations. He did not see that society's successive adjustments are as little the subject of moral judgments as is the thick skin of the pachyderm or the "cruel" crunch of the tiger's jaws. Dispassionateness and an austere objectivity must characterize the attitude of anyone who wishes to deal scientifically with society's evolution.

They are needed even more in the social sciences than in the natural because there is much more room for subjective bias in the former. Austerity and objectivity of attitude are all that can save the student of society from merely painting yet another picture of

¹ Darwin, F., *More Letters of Charles Darwin*, I, 326. The letter cited is of March 24, 1871.

his own code of mores under the guise of science — a performance in which he will be easily beaten by any second-rate newspaper-man, novelist, or preacher.

If there were no adaptation in the mores, there could not be types of mores corresponding to certain broader and even to certain local life-conditions of the societies practicing them; yet such types are to be found, and have been observed and distinguished from the most ancient times of which we have written record.

“GEOGRAPHICAL” FACTORS

Although the ultimate adjustment of all life is to physical environment, the influence of natural features upon societal forms is easy to exaggerate. Striking cases can be found in which “geographical” factors have played a determining part in human destiny. There are experts in “anthropogeography”¹ who hold that local natural surroundings, such as land-forms, climate, flora and fauna, make a society what it is and determine its history. No one wishes to deny that these are fundamental conditions of life, for the human animal as for the rest of the organic world. This, again, is particularly evident in the case of primitive peoples, for they are closer to nature than are those whose civilization forms for them a protection against the action of natural forces. Those who balk at contentions about modern, civilized societies being dependent upon conditions of geographic environment are often quite ready to concede the dominance of climatic

¹ “Malaria and Politics,” in the *Nation*, LXXXV (N. Y., Dec. 12, 1907), 534. See the various publications of E. Huntington.

and other factors over the destiny of the savage and barbaric.

Anthropogeographers are evolutionists, for they reiterate and extend the idea of adjustment to environment. They specialize in parallelisms, for they are intent upon showing that similar societal forms spring up independently under similar types of environmental influence. However, it is clear enough that peoples have borrowed mores from one another, as well as developed them for themselves. Parallelisms in the mores are genuine only where isolation is certain, so that acculturation cannot occur. As the constant tendency of civilization is to break down isolation, parallelisms become rare as civilization rises to heights; indeed, the presumption is then against parallelism, and this is reflected in the popular mind, whose tendency is to see acculturation in all cases, assuming that the familiar borrowing has always been going on. Where there is acculturation, the societal rather than the natural environment is responsible. That there is a societal environment, and that it has been strengthened in its influence by the increase and concentration of population and by the ensuing development of civilization, is a fact that seems sometimes to have escaped the anthropogeographer. This means that he has not come to appreciate the societal type of evolution as distinguished from the organic.

Civilization results also in the freeing of energy from the mere struggle for existence. Then this freed energy — while it cannot exist and so can have no results, where discouraging conditions of the environment impose a constant strain for mere livelihood; and while

the nature of its manifestations must depend upon what the environment can be made to yield for self-maintenance — may be employed in more or less whimsical or capricious ways, often quite independently of any geographic “controls.” Forms of art, for example, while they may on occasion unmistakably reflect environmental influences, may on other occasions betray no connection with them. Or, again, freed energy may be employed in reasoning about or drawing inferences from phases of the code which are themselves removed to some distance from concrete verification on the touchstone of actual life-conditions; reasoning remote from all connection with the facts of life appears in connection with politics, ethics, and philosophy. The only reflection of the environment here shown would be its relatively favorable character, in that the struggle to live in it must be easy in order to release time and energy for dreaming, wrangling, and theory-spinning. Under the high civilization of a complex, modern society, the multiplicity of causes assignable for any societal phenomenon — none of them verifiable through experimentation, while the ultimate test of group-extinction or suffering can be fended off except in the extremest cases — raises immediate distrust of anybody who asserts single, exclusive causes.

In view of such considerations, and though he knows that physical conditions lie at the base of all life, one could not ally himself unreservedly with the more ardent adherents of geographical “controls.” Among men, besides the societal environment of fellow-men, there is yet another which does not appear in nature at all: the imaginary environment of ghosts and spirits.

The universal belief in the latter is perhaps the most significant case of parallelism that we have. One of the greatest concerns in primitive life is adaptation to that environment, which is very remote from climate or topography. In societal evolution, the whole case of adjustment, like that of selection or transmission, becomes highly complicated, from the outset and in a way of its own.

In the most primitive cases of societal adjustment, where there is little or no acculturation, the organization for self-maintenance is of necessity directly responsive to natural conditions. We may go with the anthropogeographer at least that far. As for the rest of the mores, they are consistent with those of maintenance, rather than immediately with the natural environment; and they contain adjustments to the environments of fellow-men and of ghosts and spirits. It would be very straining to credulity to try to show that the political device of the electoral college, or the wording of a prayerbook, or the expedient of a companionate union, or free verse, jazz, or cubism is a response to geographical environment.

Three cases of societal adjustment are now to be sketched, by way of final illustration of the subject of this book. The first is one of adjustment by a primitive isolated people; the second is that of another relatively isolated type, that of the frontier, which, in its rapid recapitulation of a stretch of societal development, spans the chasm between the primitive and the civilized; and the third is that of an unisolated, complex, artificialized, highly modern society, the great city.

ADJUSTMENT IN PRIMITIVE ISOLATION

The Eskimos are a primitive people occupying an exceptional habitat under exceptional conditions of isolation. They are likely to show the human form of adaptation in terms approaching the lowest and simplest. Something the same might be said of any group of desert-dwellers: the Australians, the Indians of southwestern United States, the Hyperboreans of Siberia, the Bushmen of Africa. Similarly isolated are mountain and plateau peoples, as in Tibet, or the inhabitants of inaccessible islands, as the Andamanese. Steppe and plains dwellers, as the Kirghiz, or the inhabitants of any other more open type of natural environment, being as a rule considerably less isolated, do not realize for us so good a "nature's experiment."¹ What follows, concerning the Eskimo refers rather to their former conditions, under extreme isolation, than to the present; for of late some of them, for instance in Alaska, have had their life-conditions much altered, in this case by the introduction of the domesticated reindeer. The effect of such acculturation is analogous to the introduction of the horse among the Indians.²

The pursuit of the struggle for existence in the arctic region must be carried on within the conditions offered.³

¹ Details in Ratzel, F., *Anthropogeographie*, and in Semple, E. C., *Influences of Geographic Environment*, a revision of Ratzel; pp. 205-206, above.

² P. 236, above.

³ What is said here of the Eskimo is based chiefly upon the following ethnographical writings: Cranz, *Historie von Grönland*; Holm, *Ethnologisk Skizze af Angmagssalikkerne*; Fries, *Grönland, dess Natur och Innevägnare*; Nansen, *Eskimo Life*; Boas, "The Central Eskimo," in *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, VI; Nelson, "Bering Strait Eskimo," in *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, XVIII, pt. I; Murdoch, "Point Barrow Eskimo," in *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, IX; and especially Weyer, E. M., *The Eskimo*, now in process of publication.

Vegetable food can be had but in the smallest amounts, and there are no native condiments or intoxicants — hence no drunkenness. Clothing must be of a single, animal-derived type as to materials, and the fact that it is worn for protection rather than ornament has led to the adoption of practically a single pattern. Shelter must be made out of the materials at hand ; as these do not include wood, at least for many of the groups, the house-builder is thrown back upon bones, skins, stone, and snow. If the Eskimo's methods of supplying the three main needs of man are scrutinized, there can be nothing but astonishment at the cleverness displayed in adaptation and at the perfection of the result. Civilized man cannot better them much, and finds it necessary, when sojourning in the arctic regions, to adopt the native ways. This is one of the best proofs of the success of Eskimo adaptation.

The same perfection of fitness appears all through the maintenance-range. Consider the effectiveness of the tools, weapons, sledges, and canoes, of the hunting and fishing methods, and how it is attained by the use of materials whose working-up would seem hopeless for the purpose to peoples much farther advanced in civilization. Here we should note that what is to us a much superior instrument may be a maladaptation on the Eskimo stage. The introduction of the rifle among these childlike savages has led, in some cases, to indiscriminate slaughter of game in the most wasteful way. The pleasure of firing off the "thunder-tubes" and seeing the prey collapse has been succeeded by scarcity, want, and misery.

One of the necessities of the environment is the

conservation and generation of heat. To conserve animal warmth, the clothing and shelter of the Eskimo are wonderfully adapted. Similarly the heat in the bodies of slain animals is made use of by the drinking of the blood of those recently killed. And the lamp, simple as it is, and the methods of expressing oil without heat, by pounding frozen blubber, represent apt reactions of the mind upon a situation the overcoming of which alone enables human beings to live in the environment.

The summer shift to the skin tent is an adjustment which, when it was once partially given up at the instigation of aliens whose mores led them to think that people must be sedentary to be civilized, proved itself to have been entirely expedient.¹ Exposure to the elements, for one thing, killed the vermin in the winter-houses, the roofs of which were smashed when they were deserted. Further, it is noteworthy that the use of snow for building purposes forced certain of these people to adapt their architectural methods to the available material, with the result that they developed the dome — a form unparalleled among primitive peoples, since elsewhere it was not imposed in the life-conditions. The environment forced adaptation to the snow also in the form of snow-spectacles of wood, bone, or leather, with a narrow slit to look through. Each of these inventions and practices is in the highest degree rational as we look at it after the act, because it represents so expedient an adjustment. Of the arctic peoples it is said that “these peoples, sparse in numbers and much oppressed, have made more ingenious in-

¹ Nansen, F., *Eskimo Life*, p. 87.

ventions than all the Africans put together.”¹ Of this inventiveness necessity was the mother.

In such an environment the relation of population to land is unique. The former is thin and scattered (not far from 35,000 all across America), and the groups are small and segregated. The Law of Population² demands it. Immediately are affected the terms of the struggle for existence, for the social environment of neighbors is hardly represented. Hence the mores corresponding to this situation of isolation at once appear; and, except where the Eskimo border upon Indian territory, there is a virtual absence of war (though legends, probably originating while this people occupied a habitat less peculiar, refer to war) and of trade. Militancy on the one hand and commercialism on the other are nearly unrepresented. In particular there has developed a code of peace, so that Eskimo who visited Europe and saw the evidences of militarism thought of sending missionaries there to inculcate the loftier mores of amity. The absence of trade caused the natives to remain strangers to its methods and they fell especially easy victims to the frontier trader. They bartered valuable furs for trifles — in one case, a polar bear skin for a box of red-tipped safety matches that had been dropped into the water and was about to be discarded.

Out of this elementary organization came few ideas and practices centering about the relation of mine and thine. Property in land other than in the use of a hunting ground could not enter the mores, of course, and other possessions were largely communal where

¹ Ratzel, F., *Anthropogeographie*, I, 522.

² P. 30, above.

they were not, by the nature of the case, personal. Food was shared — sometimes, in times of plenty, with housemates alone; again, in times of scarcity, with all, even with those who did not belong to the village. Among the Bering Strait Eskimo, says Nelson,¹ “if a man borrows from another and fails to return the article he is not held to account for it. This is done under the general feeling that if a person has enough property to enable him to lend some of it, he has more than he needs. The one who makes the loan under these circumstances does not even feel justified in asking a return of the article, and waits for it to be given back voluntarily.” Here is an absence of recognition of capital, which operates as a brake upon the advance of the standard of living. Inheritance covers at the widest the tent and *oomiak*, or freight-boat, the equivalent, for wandering sea-farers, of house and premises. Without going into further detail it is clear that the mores about property reflect the simplicity of the maintenance-mores, responding, through them, to the conditions of the environment.

Illustrative of the foregoing simplicity are the mores surrounding societal regulation. There is virtually no government, least of all a control issuing out of militancy. The oldest man and the most skillful hunter enjoy prestige and the latter often holds the position of honor and danger, in that his *igloo*, or hut, is the one farthest north. There is no slavery and so not even the beginning of classes. It will be recalled that enslavement comes out of war or debt, and even then does not become a settled institution till the agricultural

¹ *Bulletin of American Ethnology*, XVIII, pt. I, 294.

stage is reached.¹ Here, then, where there is no war, where debts are of the sort indicated in the quotation just cited, and where agriculture is out of the question, the very basis for the development of such a phase of the mores is absent. There is no law, but merely vague precedents; and the administration of justice is mainly by individual reprisal. Crime is hardly defined, much less is there a schedule of penalties. Government is, in a word, entirely elementary.

The sex-mores harmonize with the maintenance-organization. The "sense" of shame, which comes out of a realization of invidious distinction from the rest, is rudimentary. This goes back to the character of clothing and shelter as imposed by natural conditions. The custom — an adjustment whose surrender has resulted in sickness — is to strip upon entering the *igloo*, the temperature of which, in the absence of ventilation, is high. Thus does the skin get a chance to exhale, after being inclosed in fur garments whose pores are filled up to exclude cold. The crowded *igloo* allows of little or no privacy. Hence the naturalness of nakedness and the absence of shame; hence also a lack of modesty and decency as judged from the standpoint of codes formed under other conditions.

The preliminaries to marriage and the wedding ceremony, as practiced by most other peoples, are virtually absent. The sense of the ceremony is to secure publicity of the relation of a man and woman in matrimony; but there is no need here, in a small group, to perform a ceremony of notification. Capture-survivals in connection with marriage indicate, how-

¹ P. 239, above.

ever, that under other former conditions marriage was less incidental. The traditional form of marriage is monogamy, as is natural where poverty and a strenuous struggle for life exist; but, here as elsewhere, polygamy is practiced by those who can afford it. In fact, the situation exerts a stress toward polygamy: the death-rate of males, owing to the hazard of life, is very high, reaching, it is said, eleven per cent a year; hence the prevalence of mores calculated to foster the mating of all the potential mothers.

Endogamy, or marriage within the small group, is the rule and is inevitable under population-conditions; exogamy in any wide sense is impossible. However, there is a rather strong disapprobation of close consanguineous or incestuous unions. Naturally enough there is no development of clans and tribes leading to confederation or wider societal organization. Though the position of woman is not high, the tasks that fall to her in the sex-division of labor are of sufficient significance in the struggle for existence to demonstrate her value and make her considerably more than a slave.

Children are few and their death-rate high; to find as many as three to a family is rather unusual. The nature of the food-supply imposes protracted nursing upon the mothers, and often wives pass a long period of unproductiveness due to abortion and infanticide. The few children are valued highly, however, and receive affectionate treatment. They are untrained, for the most part, except by the exigencies of life,¹ but by these are disciplined into the characteristic Eskimo mood of patient endurance, courage, and good nature.

¹ Pp. 300 ff., above.

It is clear that from all aspects the sex-mores and family life are elementary in form and that they reflect the organization for maintenance at every turn.

The severity of the struggle is such that but little energy can be freed for the arts of pleasure, except during the long darkness, which the natives while away largely in repeating myths and stories. What amusements they have are simple and childlike. Such also is the religion of the region. The late George Borup used to say that the Eskimo did not believe in God, but that they did most fervently believe in the Devil — they had nothing to expect from the former and everything from the latter. Burial customs, and other of the mores connected with the dead, witness to the presence of simple beliefs about the soul and the hereafter, but these are crude and vague. The spirits of the ice, especially those of the far north, are much feared; and explorers have always had great difficulty in inducing natives to go far toward the pole. The whole of the Eskimo religion betrays the overpowering fear of ill — a fear entirely justified amidst the life-conditions. What little cult there is is of the negative sort: avoidance and exorcism. The strain of the struggle for existence and the prevalent poverty admit of no overplus of time or wealth to be spent on the cult, so that religion too reflects indirectly the nature of the struggle in the local environment.

Here is a primitive and isolated society a survey of whose mores indicates beyond question the close adaptation of the maintenance-mores to environmental conditions and the consistency of the other mores with those of maintenance. Even in an almost unique case

of primitive isolation like this, it is possible to discover many a detail of the mores that shows no adaptation to or consistency with anything else in particular. A case would be the precise selection of days for fasting or refraining from work. These are the variations in the mores that are either of too little significance to living to have incurred selection, or are too newly arisen to have yet come under it. In dealing with adaptation it is necessary to satisfy one's self with respect to the larger and more massive groups of mores and institutions. It must be recalled that the experiments that nature performs for us are generally over a long perspective and little illuminative of detail. The most we can hope for, on our present stage of knowledge, is a high degree of probability as to the working of the larger factors only in the life of society.

CHAPTER X

ADAPTATION: THE FRONTIER SOCIETY

IF what has just been set down concerning the study of a primitive and highly isolated society is true, it is even more pertinent to bear it in mind when we approach the question of adaptation in a more complex, less primitive, and less isolated one. Such a society is the frontier group or the colony. It is a sort of primitive civilized society, and yet of course it is not really primitive. As a laconic student once put it: "Frontier society is not primitive — no more than a man who puts on overalls and fixes his plumbing is a common laborer. The frontier puts on the overalls." The Greeks used to call the city which sent out a colony the "mother-city," or "metropolis"; they made a good deal out of the analogy between the colony-metropolis relation and that of child and mother. We too speak of the mother-country and refer to colonies as daughters. There is usually a good deal of truth in popular and proverbial sayings, for they often embody tested folk-wisdom; and the present instance has something in it that is deeper than figurative. The frontier society is a child-society, with capacities for rapid growth that may enable it to equal the mother-society in point of size, strength, and culture within a relatively short time. Here is, in actuality, a case of recapitulation, where the evolution

of the child-society presents a summary, abbreviated and with a number of omissions, of course, but in the main, and in the order of rehearsal, faithful to the course of evolution traversed by the adult society. This is the reason why the study of frontier societies is so important to the science of society; it, together with the examination of savage and barbaric peoples, provides actual evidence for societal evolution and furnishes a point of detachment and perspective from which to view that of which we are all a part.

Says Sumner¹ of "Advancing Social and Political Organization in the United States":

"When we gather together the observations we have made, showing the advance of the entire social organization from the colonial settlement up to the present time, in all its branches — the industrial system, the relations of classes, the land system, the civil organization, and the organization of political institutions and liberty — we see that it has been a life-process, a growth-process, which our society had to go through just as inevitably as an infant after birth must go on to the stages of growth and experience which belong to all human beings as such. This evolution in our case has not been homogeneous. The constant extension of settlement into the open territory to the west has kept us in connection with forms of society representing the stages through which the older parts of the country have already passed. We could find to-day vast tracts of territory in which society is on the stage of organization which existed on the Atlantic coast in the seventeenth century; and between those places and the densest centers of population in the East we could find represented every intervening stage through which our society has passed in two hundred years. This combination of heterogeneous stages of social and political organization in one state is a delicate experiment; they are sure to contend for the mastery in it, and that strife threatens disruption. As I believe that this view has rarely received any attention, it is one of the chief points

¹ In *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), p. 331. This was written probably in 1896 or 1897.

I have wished to make in surveying the advance of social and political organization in this country."

From the evolutionary point of view a colony is a reversion. But that means no more than that it is an adaptation to a set of conditions out of whose range older societies have passed. Reversion is as much adaptation as is progression; both are evolution. What produces the reversion is the change from a partly artificialized environment to a wholly natural one. The frontier society then adapts itself to the crudity of nature, sacrificing much of the civilization it had, in favor of forms of adaptation (and this constitutes a remarkable case of parallelism) which are successful as they resemble those of the natives. Acculturation takes place from the "lower" toward the "higher" race as well as in the other direction; thus the colonists in New England, as we shall see, "Indianized." In short, the colony or frontier society presents cases of adaptation as striking in their way as those of a primitive society of savages.

There are two main types of frontier society which are differentiated one from the other upon the basis of the character of the response of their maintenance-mores to physical environment, chiefly climate. These, distinguished upon the basis of their industrial organization, are the farm-colony of the temperate zone and the plantation-colony of the tropics,¹ a differentiation representing a fine underlying case of adaptation, which will presently be developed. The two types have generic likenesses in characters common to all frontier societies which need to be brought out in advance, by

¹ Keller, *Colonization*, ch. I.

first throwing the temperate-zone colony into contrast with the always temperate-zone mother-country, and then the plantation-colony into contrast with the farm-colony. Hence the bulk of description will fall to the latter form, which is the one chiefly in mind in dealing with the generic characters above referred to. The temperate colony is, in a sense, a simpler case, because it has more conditions in common with the older society; there is between them, in general, an identity of climatic environment and of race.

THE TEMPERATE FRONTIER

The significant condition in any country is the relation of population to means of subsistence, that is, in general, the relation of population to land. Population, we recall,¹ tends to increase up to the supporting power of the environment (land) on a given stage of the arts and for a given standard of living. If, as in a colony, there is a superfluity of land, the arts may decline or retrograde, especially if the standard of living also declines, and yet the population may increase rapidly. If this were not so, new lands could scarcely be settled. In actuality the arts do not decline to the level occupied by them among the adapted natives of the new land; some of the arts brought in from the older countries are applicable at once to the new conditions and constitute a support for population. The conjuncture (relation of supply and demand) is overwhelmingly in favor of men as against land.² Hence

¹ P. 30, above.

² Sumner, *The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays*, pp. 111 ff., 293 ff.; Humboldt, A. von, *Essai Politique*, I, 63.

a temperate colony shows, as a rule, a rapid increase of population. The struggle for self-maintenance is relatively easy.

However, with the necessary retrogression of the arts as a whole and of civilization, there is a lessening of protection from natural selection.¹ The death-rate is likely to be high. The frontier is no place for the old and feeble; in fact, there is a sort of preliminary selection before emigration, as is shown by the overplus of men and the relative absence of women on the frontier. The weak and timid are repelled by potential danger and suffering, by the "muchness" and crudeness of raw nature. Counterselection is much less frequent under such conditions. A temperate colony generally shows a high physical quality of population — youth, strength, and vitality — as well as a rapid increase of numbers.

The standard of living cannot but decline; indeed there exists no possibility of realizing a high standard. Beyond physical comfort there is little to strive for. But a lowered standard of living means at the least less of voluntary restriction of numbers. Marriages are early and families large. Often a low birth-rate is transformed into a high one upon removal to the frontier and upon the consequent cessation of the struggle to realize a standard of living no longer represented in the environment. On the frontier, the French show no symptoms of "race-suicide."

These are some of the major relations between population and land as they work out on the frontier where land is plenty and men scarce. The unoccupied

¹ Pp. 112, 260, above.

land constitutes a sort of vacuum into which population tends to flow, not only by immigration but also by natural increase. This capacity for rapid growth insures that the colony will presently catch up with the older countries, passing swiftly through stages across which the latter have moved slowly.

The general case may profit in clearness by a parallel illustration where the conjuncture of men and land was suddenly and violently altered by entirely different forces. The Black Death of 1348¹ acted through all Europe as a reducer of population, and during the ensuing century the effect is visible on the whole societal organization in all its institutions and customs. Similarly in the case of the Hundred Years' War in France. Great areas returned to wilderness and then were re-occupied as free land, that is, by immigration. Those who went out to reclaim the waste or into military frontier stations were freed from traditional tenure. There arose a new contract-relation which, in the outcome, was advantageous because adapted to the altered conditions of the struggle for existence. All through the last centuries, as the result of the discovery of new lands, these phenomena persisted. Steam navigation, in effect, added millions of square miles to western Europe, and the influence of the ensuing underpopulation upon European societal structure has been pronounced.

Owing to the population-conditions of the temperate colony, the people are scattered in segregated small groups over wide areas. This results in an isolation

¹ Gorman, H. S., "When the Black Death Struck Europe," in *N. Y. Times* (Feb. 20, 1927), a review of a compilation from original sources.

and a diversity of interests that set the groups off one from another in somewhat the manner of primitive tribes and communities. Socializing forces are weakened and there appears a sort of lapse into the atomistic form. The subdivision of the population into little communities makes it seem at times as if the patriarchal family had come again into its own. Then with the filling up of the country these small groups are obliged to coalesce under pressure, as did the "Thirteen Colonies," and so again there appears a recapitulation of the process of compounding societies which produces the integrated state form.

On the basis of these population-conditions now surveyed, and the maintenance-conditions resulting from them, there has grown up a characteristic set of mores of the frontier type. As we come to particularize somewhat more, it is convenient to have some definite frontier society of temperate climate in mind. There are a number to select from; but a more comprehensive picture can be gained if we take a European colony rather than one founded by another race, and a modern colony rather than an ancient. We are to have in mind chiefly the northern English colonies in what is now the United States, though there is no intent to exclude the offshoots of these colonies toward the American West.¹ In general it is the colonization of

¹ Most of the facts cited here are well known, having been set forth in such books as Turner's writings on *The Frontier in American History* (N. Y., 1920), Bruce's *Virginia*, Weeden's *New England*, and Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, as well as in more extended histories of the period. A great deal of what follows goes back to Professor Sumner's courses in American History, parts of which are in print in his *Collected Essays* ("War and Other Essays," "Earth Hunger and Other Essays," "The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays," "The Forgotten Man and Other Essays"—especially the essay on "Advancing Social and Political Organization in the

this country, especially that of the northern members of the Thirteen Colonies, that should be in mind in what is immediately to be read about frontier societies and their conditions and habitudes. Here it is possible to see an extraordinary case of adaptation in the mores.

In the American colonies of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, the industrial organization reflects with fidelity the conditions of the struggle for existence and the competition of life. The commanding phenomenon is the simplification, all along the line, of the maintenance-mores; they came to resemble those of the adapted natives. There was a drop from the manufacturing or commercial economy to the agricultural, to the pastoral, and even to the hunting stage. The characteristic developments of an advanced industrial organization — specialization of function, with consequent coöperation — fell back to much more rudimentary forms, comparable to those of the natives. This phenomenon appeared also during the World War, soap and chocolate being used as money by the soldiers, and the peasants paying for shoes with geese.¹ With the return of the organization of labor to less complex and evolved forms went that of capital; this prime necessity of an advanced civilization existed in small amounts and was largely unavailable under the ruder and less artificialized life-conditions.

For present purposes the organization for societal self-maintenance may be readily viewed under the

United States"). The conclusions about tropical colonies have been derived from reading represented in good part in the bibliography of Keller, *Colonization*.

¹ Harrington, J. W., "Primitive Barter Again," in *N. Y. Times* (Jan. 4, 1920).

captions of production, consumption, and distribution. The first of these was the result of a direct and largely unconcerted assault on the flora and fauna. Nearly everybody was something of a farmer or cattle-raiser, whatever his ostensible occupation; the absence of the narrow specialist is as striking as the presence of the Yankee jack-of-all-trades. Of manufacturing there was little except along the line of home-industry for local use; and this condition was encouraged and even enforced by the mother-country, which was bent on a division of function as between itself and the colonies — a specialization of economic function that was in the nature of things, especially in the early life of the colonies, and clearly betrays the colonial society in adjustment.

Consumption was of simple things locally produced. Food was acquired for the most part by the eater of it, clothes were home-spun where they were not made of the pelts of animals, houses were the product of the personal industry of their future owners, aided by coöperation or "trading work" in the "raising" process on the part of neighbors. In a word, the consumption of materials for self-maintenance took place near the spot where they were produced.

This was necessarily the case in view of the rudimentary character of distribution. Roads and vehicles were alike primitive, and the water-ways, though not well-charted and safeguarded, provided the best means of communication. Freight-carrying boats were small and slow. Under such conditions, exchange was of necessity primitive in type, being developed on a small and local scale. It was largely barter-trade. The

characteristic local commodity (beaver-skins, tobacco, rum) became the standard of value and the circulating medium (wampum) was adopted from the Indians. Many years ago, on the Pacific Coast, hides were called "California bank-notes."¹ Peddling introduced a certain amount of goods from outside, and the local fair, that stock transitional form to the market, became characteristic of American as of all frontier societies. Frontier trade, lacking the protection of the market, whereby prices are standardized for all, and relying on defectiveness of information, showed a natural tendency toward haggling and overreaching.

The conjuncture (relation of supply and demand) as between land and men being in favor of men, rents were low and wages high. Land could have little rent where anyone could become an owner with comparatively little effort; wages had to be high, for the laborer must be paid for renouncing independent ownership and cultivation. Again, in the relative absence of capital and under the risks attendant to lending, the rate of interest was so high as to recall the monstrous figures reached by primitive peoples. All these conditions represent adaptive reactions on environment, and afford parallelisms to the adjustments of primitive societies.

In short the struggle for existence was crude and coarse; but with the forces at hand there was presently an exuberance of simple satisfactions. Quantity came to be prized over a quality that could not be attained as yet; the standard of living was a simple and unrefined one. Hence the criticisms passed by cultured travelers

¹ Dana, R. H., Jr., *Two Years before the Mast* (New York, 1911), p. 89.

upon the colonies and also, later, upon the United States; hence also the long subsequent strictures of a self-satisfied, ethnocentric Dickens or Spencer upon American life.

Part of the maintenance-organization in the colonies was military, and this also shows a primitive type. Methods of warfare were largely those of the Indians, and that they were better adapted to the local environment than those of the English army, for example, was shown in many an engagement, small and large, besides the historic one of Braddock. The feeling about chivalry in conflict and the regard for human life suffered a change. Certainly a reversion to Indian mores took place from time to time along these lines; indeed, it was respecting methods of warfare practiced by the colonists that the word "Indianize" was used. Various forms of barbaric cruelty have been exhibited by settlers in America, even so savage a practice as that of scalping women and small children.

Self-maintenance being assured, a society turns naturally to self-gratification: to the satisfaction of wants over and above subsistence. The provision for these, on the frontier, is of a crude and "boorish" order. High-class drama or opera are out of the question and are not missed; art in its more refined manifestations would be entirely out of place. The type of amusement is rather the itinerant "show," show-boat,¹ circus, and, more locally, the homely festivities accompanying corn-shucking, house-warming, horse-racing, turkey-shooting, and so on. Gambling has been a constant feature of frontier life, as of that of the

¹ Ferber, E., *Show-Boat* and *Cimarron*, novels of the frontier.

savage. The satisfaction of curiosity has been attained by the practice of a wide hospitality and by an extensive development of gossip, still characteristic of isolated communities. Litigation has offered a congenial field for self-gratification; the baiting of the English governor also was a favorite pastime in the colonies, ranking with the prodding and other bedeviling of some ancient and mangy bear. Politics formed a most promising field of diversion. Even the practice of religion became a means of self-gratification; church-going was one of the few means of gratifying the so-called "social instinct" in an environment of comparative isolation; between lengthy sermons the worshipers adjourned to the graveyard and, munching their lunches the while, tore many a reputation to tatters.

The mores of self-perpetuation exhibit the same phenomena of adjustment. Woman's economic function was arduous, but honorable; hence her position was high. On the frontier women are scarce and valuable.¹ There was less of property-consideration in marriage than in a more developed community and the wife was more of a help-mate. Like the savage consort, she must be a good worker and a fecund mother. Children, under the existing conditions of easy support, brief education, and scarcity of labor, were economic assets, where, in a more developed society, they are liabilities. Families held together in the patriarchal style; much was made of the extended

¹ This was chiefly under the agricultural economy. In early Kentucky "the female sex, though certainly an object of much more feeling and regard than among the Indians, was doomed to endure much hardship and to occupy an inferior rank in society to her male partner; in fine our frontier people were much allied to their contemporaries of the forest in many things more than in their complexion." Butler, *Kentucky*, p. 135.

relationship created by a necessary endogamy. The maid-servant, often the daughter of a neighbor, was "help" rather than hireling, and belonged, as did the Roman *famulus*, to the *familia*. One of the curious details in the sex-mores, of which a number could be collected, is afforded by the practice of "bundling." This was a variation in courtship, whereby, since the only warm room, in winter, was the populous and curious kitchen — the New England parlor being dark and funereal — lovers lay together upon the parlor sofa, snugly bundled up against the cold. The custom was seldom "immoral." It was an adjustment to conditions and has its parallels over the world.¹

The religious code was not a gracious one, but suited, rather, to the ruder conditions of life. Like that of the Boers, another colonial society showing characteristic adaptations, it was of the harsh Old Testament type, with certain ingredients of superstition and persecution, as in the witchcraft beliefs. A common creed formed a socializing element where there were few others, and in the face of a harsh struggle against nature, natives, and external enemies, conformity was insisted upon. Consider the persecution of dissenters like Roger Williams. There were no doctrinal novelties or frills; ingenuity and reflection went for the most part into the affairs of practical life. The religion of these colonists, as of the Boers, seems never to have interfered much with the realization of less spiritual purposes, for instance, the trade in slaves and rum.

It has been noted above that the settlements pro-

¹ Sumner, *Folkways*, §§ 576-581; Sumner-Keller, *Science of Society*, index, sub "Bundling."

duced locally for local consumption. There was in them an economic self-sufficiency and independence that worked out into a general mood corresponding to these special qualities. This mood was easily exaggerated into testiness and irritability, like that of a boy who has been much assisted by parents but, wanting now to have all the privileges and immunities of independent manhood, is irked both by attempted control and also by a lurking sense of obligation for favors received. The colonists were quick to suspect an infringement upon their rights and liberties and prompt to resent it. They were hard to manage. This was due in part to their life of economic independence, which contrasted strongly with tropical colonial life, as we shall soon see, and partly also to other factors, as follows, which developed as adjustments to life-conditions.

Sumner has been quoted elsewhere¹ on the topic of colonial democracy; the following passage² enforces much that is brought out in the former citations, from a somewhat more general point of view. It is to be understood that what has been called "democracy" is not always due to the same causes.

"All men are easily equal when all are substantially well off, because the social pressure is slight; it is intense social pressure which draws the society out into ranks and classes. The relaxation of social pressure lets the ranks and classes come together again.

"The three classes which form the skeleton of any aristocratic system, that is, of a system in which classes are widely separated from each other, are landlords, tenants, and laborers. The landlords are the holders of the land. The tenants are the holders of capital, because the land must be intensively cultivated, which

¹ Pp. 229-230, above.

² Sumner, W. G., *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), pp. 156-158.

cannot be done without capital. The laborers are those who have neither capital nor land, and who seek a livelihood by putting personal services into the industrial organization.

"If the population is dense and the land is all occupied, the possession of it is the possession of a natural monopoly of a thing which is in high demand. The landowners, therefore, possess an immense social advantage. The tenants and the whole middle capitalist class, which stands on the same social plane with them, possess the second social advantage. The laborers are those who possess neither. The three, therefore, are widely separated one from the other as respects the conditions of material well-being and earthly happiness.

"Suppose then that new social power is won — let it be assumed that some new mechanical force is obtained or that new areas of land are made accessible — what is the effect on the position of classes and on the relative difference in the status of classes? Plainly the social pressure is relaxed. The landlord finds that his monopoly is no longer worth as much as before, because the supply of it has been greatly increased. His rents decline, and his tenants refuse any longer to be tenants because it is so easy to obtain land and become their own landlords. In their turn they find it harder to hire laborers; for when land is abundant intensive cultivation is no longer necessary and no longer pays. Capital is no longer indispensable for the cultivation, or a small amount of it will suffice. The laborer, therefore, is no longer differentiated from the other classes. He can easily obtain land and also the minimum of capital necessary to cultivate it. Thus the landlord comes down to be his own tenant and his own laborer. The tenant owns his own land and is his own laborer. The laborer becomes his own landlord and his own employer. The three classes have melted into one. It is no longer worth while to own a large estate in land, for the owner could not economically exploit it. A substantial equality of all on the middle rank is the inevitable social consequence, with democracy and all the other cognate political results.

"At the same time, since capital is no longer so necessary to cultivate the ground, and since the accumulation of capital goes on with constantly greater rapidity, on account of the large proportion of the product to the labor under the new state of social power, and since the capital cannot be made productive without new supplies

of labor, the men are on all accounts in demand and are worth more and more when measured in capital. The class, therefore, which was, under the first supposition, the worst off, obtains under the second supposition the command of the situation.

"Is not this the correct interpretation of what we see going on about us? If it is, then the dogmatic or philosophical theorems, instead of being the cause of our social arrangements, are only the metaphysical dress which we have amused ourselves by imagining upon them. We are not free and equal because Jefferson put it into the Declaration of Independence that we were born so; but Jefferson could put it into the Declaration of Independence that all men are born free and equal because the economic relations existing in America made the members of society to all intents and purposes free and equal. It makes some difference to him who desires to attain to a correct social philosophy which of these ways of looking at the matter is true to the facts."

"Many people have asked how it could come to pass that Lincoln, growing up in a mean environment, and lacking culture and education, could become 'the first American,' and interpreter of democracy to all the world. As a primary essential, he was of sound stock, and had great personal capacity. But that was not all. Very generally, American public men before Lincoln had grown up in the environment of slave and free, master and servant, employer and employee, rich and poor, aristocrat and plebeian. How many of them were born and bred aristocrats, trying to interpret democracy to America? But Lincoln grew up in a democracy. The economic quality of his boyhood neighbors would satisfy an advanced social revolutionist to-day. None were rich, and none without food and shelter. If one man worked for another, it was to accumulate a stake, that he might soon become independent. It was not necessary for Abraham Lincoln out of his mind to create a new conception of democracy. He grew up in a democracy, observed it, and appreciated it, and then lived and spoke what was in his heart. As a man, he did his best to do away with the physical limitations of his boyhood environment by the building of roads and by encouraging industry, while at the same time endeavoring to retain equality of opportunity. He did not confuse primitive living with democracy.

"The primitive environment of Lincoln's boyhood strongly favored this economic equality. The country was newly settled by vigorous, adventurous men, who had brought little or no property with them. There had not been time for separation of those of greater or less natural ability. There were no immediate traditions of aristocracy or of servitude. The lack of transportation, of markets, and of cities prevented the accumulation of wealth, while free land, free fuel and building materials, and abundance of wild game, prevented poverty from being acute. Everyone had to work for a living, and everyone could get a living by working."¹

This democratic form of the colonial mores arose, then, in the nature of things, and was not the product of the happy thoughts or superior wisdom of the Fathers. Even where the settlers held an aristocratic tradition, as most of the English emigrants did, it could not stand: there was no place for the wealthy, nor yet for the confirmed pauper; neither for the aristocrat nor for the feudal retainer. Both extremes of society were repelled from an environment where wealth could not profitably be invested in large amounts, where control over others, owing to the ease of evasion, was weak, and where everyone had to take care of himself without much aid.² Hence the bulk of the stream of immigration was composed of the sturdy middle class, or, in the case of the redemptioners, for example, of those who could speedily rise to that class. The history of the grants to court favorites shows how out of keeping were aristocratic institutions in the new land; what was conferred upon them was a good chance to ruin them-

¹ Morgan, A. E., "New Light on Lincoln's Boyhood," in *Atlantic Monthly*, CXXV (Feb., 1920), pp. 212-213.

² Several novels have been written about the rearrangement of the positions of gentry and workers when exposed to frontier conditions. Barrie, J. M., *Admirable Crichton*.

selves. Again, though it was tried, slavery could not flourish long in competition with free labor; slaves were few and not sharply distinguished from the rest of the population. Humanitarian devices could not be developed to any extent or supported under the conditions of small and detached towns, and public dependents were therefore relatively unrepresented.

All these conditions made for homogeneity of population; and the situation as respects rent and wages, added to these, produced a general feeling of equality — of being as good a man as the next one — that was reflected in the mores throughout the whole societal system. Hence a democracy inherent in the nature of things and representing the type of adaptation of society to environment inevitable for success under the existing life-conditions. Hence the type of political system: town-meeting, selectmen, and the other familiar forms. Hence also the impatience of control, revolution, and the founding of a democratic republic.

As in the case of the rest of the mores, those which constitute regulation took on a simplified form. Government was local and its machinery simple. The democratic tendency led to the lodging of temporary authority in the hands of selected men (selectmen); but this did not prevent the strong character, who was able to direct and lead the assault upon a harsh environment, from exercising great influence. As in time of war, the military chief got political position. In general, however, law and regulation were relaxed except in the matter of essentials, there to be strengthened and made more arbitrary. There were not so many petty regulations on conduct, for those appear

only when men are crowded together and societal adjustment calls for a nicer delimitation of spheres of rights. Regulation was, as it were, less extensive and more intensive; including less, but operating with greater severity in a smaller field.

Without trying to go into full detail of the adaptation of the mores of a frontier society to its environment, one finds adjustment emerging with especial distinctness in the case of frontier justice. The beginnings of justice lay in the individual settlement of private wrongs. This is a primitive form; very early in the evolution of societal institutions the ruling power takes over such settlement. On the frontier, there is a return or reversion to the primitive form; even where the matter is not purely individual, there exists the hereditary feud,¹ or a summary settlement, as in "lynch-law," or something approaching court-martial.² This is not always due to the utter absence of law or of a recognized government; it is generally referable, where it is not merely an outbreak of unregulated passion, to a dim recognition of the maladaptability to life-conditions of the machinery of justice as developed in a more artificialized environment. The law's complications, expenses, and delays detract from its usefulness anywhere, but they render it entirely ineffective where the society has no apparatus of police and prisons, and where the business of living presses too heavily upon the population to admit of long-drawn-out processes. Hence frontier justice is summary, even

¹ Described by Clemens, S. L., in *Huckleberry Finn*.

² Cutler, J. E., *Lynch Law*; Langford, N. P., *Vigilante Days and Ways*; Haydon, A. L., *The Trooper Police of Australia*; "Lawlessness in Wild Countries," in *N. Y. Times* (March 10, 1912).

cruel (tar and feathers), and approaches the primitive type.¹

The severity of penalties exacted on the frontier is, at first sight, all out of proportion to the magnitude of the offense; horse-stealing, for instance, has often been punished there by death. But this case demonstrates the inevitability in its setting of a social practice, to a city-dweller as unjustifiable as many a habitude of savages. Horse-thieves were at least potential murderers, because they took from a man what was all but essential and often quite indispensable to life. And so the retaliation was proportioned to the actual peril. A parallel is the rough handling of a miscreant who has stolen gasoline from a Maine fisherman's boat, where thefts from pleasure-craft may not be reported; they are condoned, lest some detective agency be instituted.

In connection with crime and punishment the case of the so-called convict or penal colony affords a striking example of adjustment. One of the surprising facts about such colonies is that presently they become respectable and, as in the case of Australia, develop law and order. It is also found to be true that the deported criminal often becomes a useful member of the colonial society. Some criminal colonies have presently served notice upon the deporting country that they would receive no more convicts, but would retort in kind. The explanation of this situation is, from the evolutionary standpoint, simple enough. A criminal is one who departs in his behavior from certain essentials of the mores, conceived so to be by

¹ A graphic study in frontier justice is worked out in Wister's novel, *The Virginian*.

the society in which he lives. Often, however, what would be a crime in a settled, civilized community would not be even a misdemeanor on the frontier, with its primitive code. In antiquity, Hercules was a god; yet an individual who duplicated his boisterous practices in an environment of civilization would be imprisoned. The rude strength which cannot brook the restraint of the code developed in an artificialized environment may be an asset in direct contact with the rudeness of nature. If crime is a sort of throwback, then the criminal may be well adapted to the code of a less evolved stage of societal evolution. The criminal stock gets a new start and is found at length to have adjusted itself to evolving stages of the code; it thus ceases to be criminal. And if, as was so often the case in the past, a person was branded as a criminal and deported for slight infractions of the arbitrary code of a ruling class, the explanation becomes still easier; in other cases the line between the criminal and the patriot can scarcely be drawn apart from a knowledge of who has won out. To the British, Washington was a traitor.

It would appear, then, that a frontier-society is obliged to adapt itself to an unartificialized environment and that in so doing it presents a case of retrogression as seen from the viewpoint of "civilization and progress." It would seem sometimes that the "new" society has to learn the lessons of civilization all over again; that it cannot but fall into the administrative, financial, and other blunders out of whose heritage of ill the more developed societies have painfully extricated themselves. Thus does the child's life-

experience repeat that of the race. Experience of these ills is really essential, for only by reason of the pain of maladaptation is a better adjustment to constantly changing conditions attained.

THE TROPICAL FRONTIER

It is useful at this point to draw a contrast between the mores of two types of frontier society, whose basic distinction is that one develops in the temperate zone and the other in the tropics.¹ These differences in societal forms, ensuing as they do upon adaptation to diverse sets of environmental conditions, form another clean-cut case of adaptation in the mores.

When Europeans migrate to another part of their own climatic zone, the comparatively slight change is a beneficial one, other things being equal, for the human organism. Further, the competition with the natives is comparatively short and the coercion to healthful activity is beneficial. It is quite otherwise when migration seeks the hot lands: the organism feels a violent change which is especially hard on the women and children; in India, they must be sent to the hills during the hot weather, and both they and the men must go back to England periodically; and there descends on the powers of the immigrant a lethargy which renders him economically of small use. Also the menace of the acclimatized natives is always present, inasmuch as the white man cannot sweep them aside in competition.

These circumstances are reflected in the conditions

¹ This contrast is worked out in greater detail in the author's *Colonization*, ch. I.

of population. In the temperate zone the immigration is comparatively copious, and, at least after a short time, includes both sexes. Natural increase is rapid and there are few half-breeds. The population is biologically homogeneous, and it is vigorous and healthy. In the tropics, on the contrary, immigration is slight, and is almost exclusively of males. Natural increase also, for the immigrant race, is inconsiderable, and mixed matings result in many hybrids. The immigrants cannot work the soil and are neither healthy nor vigorous. The population is biologically heterogeneous.

In the organization of the struggle for existence the contrast is sharp. The products of the temperate colony are essentially those of the home land. They constitute a variety of necessities, raised on the small scale on small freeholds or farms, which are locally self-maintaining. Labor is in the hands of the immigrants and it is vigorous and carefully expended with a view to preserving the soil. In the absence of the threat of scarcity, due to the variety of crops raised, there is developed an economic independence of the mother-country and, indeed, of the rest of the world. In the warmer countries, on the other hand, the production is of luxuries which are few and costly, and which must be raised on the grand scale to be profitable. As the white man cannot do the work and the acclimatized native does not want to do it, there arises a "native labor question," which has generally meant enslavement in some form. This mode of organization has led to uneconomic methods of treating the soil; the white men, only by rare exception more than temporary

sojourners in the land, do not naturally develop far-sighted policies in production. The colony remains economically dependent on the mother-country, both by reason of its narrow specialization in production and because of its need of protection as against the natives. The failure of the staple crop means ruin, and the natives always outnumber and are apt to turn upon their masters.

This sharp contrast in the industrial organization, following upon environmental diversities, is reflected in the secondary societal forms. As the mores of the frontier society in temperate regions have been described rather fully, we may confine ourselves in the main to a list of points of difference shown in the other climatic environment. In place of the small freehold we find here the manor and the chartered company; this is a profound difference in organization, resulting among other things in much absenteeism in tropical colonies, with consequent inevitable results in the treatment of the labor force and in the general societal organization. European shareholders in a colonial company, becoming impatient of what they considered low dividends, complain to the management. The pressure is transmitted down until it impinges upon the local overseer, who gets out his whip and uses it in a manner to horrify the shareholder (who is perhaps a pious widow of a parson), did he know of it. The tropical colonies, where the natives persist, have also been the classic grounds for a missionary activity unknown in intensity where the immigrants could quickly eliminate the natives and become engrossed in more practical matters.

Women, in the tropics, being for the most part native consorts, are not valued highly; and the importance of children, who are mainly half-breeds, is less. This reacts upon the whole domestic organization, which cannot be of the type sketched as characterizing the temperate frontier. Scarcely any feature of this latter type is represented in marriage and the family of the tropical order.

In the hot lands, population is socially as well as biologically heterogeneous. There is no middle class, for the Europeans are, at one end of the scale, investors, aristocrats, or officials, and reckless adventurers at the other. Slavery, flourishing as the only sweeping method of industrial adjustment to life-conditions, divides the population sharply and creates widely divergent classes. Wages are low or, under slavery, are absent; it is not possible to utilize the soil without considerable capital; there is little temptation to aspire to ownership of land.

Economic dependence works out into political dependence: tropical "dependencies" are protectorates and crown colonies, not loosely connected and virtually self-governing societies. There is, instead of equality and democracy, inequality in many grades and aristocracy. A tropical colony could as readily become a democracy as a temperate colony could be an aristocracy. The destinies of the two are diverse: the one remains under some sort of tutelage, while the other develops at length into an independent state.

It may be useful to point this contrast by employing the parallel column.

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TEMPERATE COLONY	TROPICAL COLONY
Climatic change favorable	Climatic change unfavorable
Conflict with natives short	Menace of natives
Immigration of men and women	Immigration of men
Health and activity	Lethargy

Population

Immigration numerous	Immigration slight
Natural increase large	Natural increase slight
Biological homogeneity	Biological heterogeneity (mongrels)
Labor wholesome	Labor impossible

Industrial Organization

Farm unit	Plantation unit
Production of necessities, various and cheap	Production of luxuries, few and costly
Production on the small scale	Production on the large scale
Free labor, no native labor	Compulsory native labor
Thrifty utilization of soil	Improvident utilization of soil
Security against crop-failure, by variety	Danger of failure of staple
Economic independence	Economic dependence

General Societal Organization

Small freehold	Manor, chartered company, absenteeism
Women valuable; high status	Women of low value (natives); low status
Children valuable as assets; numerous	Children liabilities; few of pure breed
Family life basis of societal life	Family life undeveloped
Ephemeral missions	Developed missions
Middle class	Castes; rich and poor
No slaves	Slaves
Wages high	Wages low (zero for slaves)
Equality; democracy	Inequality; discrimination
Destiny; statehood	Destiny; dependency

A former student¹ has contributed the following suggestion as to a third type of colony. "The chapter on the adaptation of the two types of frontier colonies, the farm colony and the plantation colony, suggests to me still a third category which undoubtedly belongs in frontier life and whose complexities and problems resemble the two cited above. I refer to the mining camp, to the railroad construction camp, to the large ranch, etc. — isolated societies where men are in the vast majority, and where woman exerts practically no direct influence on the shaping of the mores. These camps are unique among frontier societies in that they exist now in as great, and even greater numbers, than at any time in the past, whereas such is certainly not the case with the frontiers of the world. As industry expands, and population increases, we go farther and farther afield in search of natural resources, and build carriers to bring back the products.

"The great difference of such a group from the balance of frontier types is, of course, its temporary nature. Any code of mores, adapted to conditions, must be of mushroom growth, for unless the camp is located in a naturally strategic spot, it is doomed to speedy extinction when its immediate need passes. In fact, considering the slow accretion of any set of mores, those of such camps can be called only sets of codes. These codes have certain features which differ one from the other, responding to the environments. It would seem that each railhead would resemble in every detail its precursor, yet in the building of the Grand Trunk Pacific, the newest of the transcontinental railroads, each camp, as the line advanced, had its own character and its own code of laws and customs. Between different mining camps of the same company, where the same policies of management are pursued, there are nevertheless distinct divergences in customs — one camp will get the reputation of being dead and lifeless, while the next will have precisely the contrary renown. But since such divergences are legion, and relatively unimportant, it is the conditions which all 'camp-colonies' have in common which justify discussion.

"The greatest likeness between these groups is the lack of any home influences — those most effective in 'tying a man down.' If there is no incentive to build a comfortable home amid favorable

¹ Bennett, R. H.

surroundings, a man is apt to be very indifferent to his environment, as long as it does not bring him acute physical discomfort. A camp contains as many right-thinking men as any other society, and more strong men, but they tolerate conditions which would be utterly abhorrent in any other civilization — dance-halls, saloons, streets of gambling-houses and brothels — all tolerated without protest, for the camper, after the first shock of 'acclimatization,' believes them none of his business. That is not a growth of new mores, apparently, but an ignoring of the old codes which each man brings out to the isolated group. He believes that he can 'play his own game' — do as he wishes — and take the consequences without having them redound on the innocent, and exhibits what appears to an outsider to be an amazing indifference and irresponsibility. In such a colony, offenses which are ordinarily taken care of by the law become matters of personal conflict between the aggrieved and the aggressor. When conditions get 'too bad,' there is no redress through the regularly constituted authorities, but vigilante commissions are organized to deal in a summary manner with offenders — as, for example, the deportation of the I. W. W.'s from Bisbee, Arizona, some time ago. The latter had offended in something which touched the most basic elements of the code, namely, the second great similarity in the life of these communities, of great prominence in any such 'camp-colony,' The Work.

"For keen attention is concentrated upon the business of the place, the distractions being less than in any other kind of society. There is usually one common enterprise, or industry, which is a very strong bond of unity, and practically the only one. Let a man transgress against The Work, and he speedily comes to grief. A cattle thief was pursued with much greater avidity in the Old West than a plain murderer. A pump man in a mine, who 'floods the level' has more disgrace to bear than if he had run amok in the main street of the town. He keeps a number of men from work, and pay. The most important item of news in a camp becomes that pertaining to the common business — such as the distance the rail was pushed forward the last week, or the tonnage of the Queen Mine for the day. Questions of government, of civic policy, are secondary, as would naturally be expected, to those of The Job. Of course in any society, a man's own work is more important to him than all

the weighty matters of state, but there are many different interests, and the common meeting ground is upon some extraneous topic.

"It would seem that only in respect to the common task are there prohibitions and inhibitions, and the whole philosophy of the inhabitants, benighted or carefree as you choose, is summed up in the advice which Mark Twain gives to the tenderfoot in 'Roughing It' — to fight shy of trouble and hoe his own row."

Here are the outlines of a significant dual example of adaptation in the mores, where those of maintenance first adjust themselves to the environment, and then form the basis for a general societal code consistent with them. From his general information, the reader will be able to fill out many details of these outlines. An appreciation of the nature and course of development of frontier communities will make clear to anyone the significance of the study of such societies for the general science of society. As in the case of primitive types, their processes of adjustment can be more readily apprehended than those of an older and more complex group; and then their development, taking place rapidly through various stages, in a recapitulatory manner, enables us the more easily to derive the origin and nature of the complex from those of the simple. This is one of the "experiments" which nature performs for the scientific student of human society; as it is hardly paralleled on the large scale, and cannot be repeated indefinitely, it deserves the most attentive examination and analysis.

CHAPTER XI

ADAPTATION : THE CITY

WHEN we come to adjustment in the mores of a highly civilized society, the subject reveals at once an extreme complication. For, to use the figure employed before, the life of such a society, in an artificialized environment, is lived on a sort of scaffolding or staging — on a plane above the natural surface. Though it must always rest upon the latter and be subject to the results of the oscillation or upheaval of its support, yet where this sustaining natural surface shows many roughnesses and inequalities, these are smoothed out, as it were, upon the artificial staging. To change the figure, the road of civilization is like a railway-line; although it follows in general the topography of the earth-surface, it yet tunnels certain obstacles and spans others, preserving a general level in spite of considerable natural irregularities. The more perfect the roadway, the less does it turn aside and otherwise conform to the minor features of natural environment.

Thus do the mores of a civilized society reflect less faithfully the minor features of the physical environment; they conform to the staging rather than to the supporting surface — to the artificialized environment rather than to the natural. Let us then consider somewhat more closely than we have done hitherto the

nature of this artificialized environment, never forgetting, in so doing, that we have in it a great feat in adaptation. By learning the laws of nature and conforming to them men are able to construct a railway line passing through mountains and over chasms; and by the same process they have built up the staging upon which civilized people pass their existence, the artificialized environment in which they live and move.

Since, to preserve and extend this staging, there must be labor, capital, and free interchange of products, material and other, the mores of civilized peoples must include industry, foresight, peace, and mutual toleration; and the opposite qualities of slothfulness, improvidence, and animosity must be reduced to a minimum. War, which is a sort of reversion to a primitive form of selection, may tear away whole sections of the civilization-staging; though it often destroys the useless and the unfavorable variations, it is not discriminating, and much that must be replaced goes down in the general catastrophe. War takes its toll from both labor and capital, the two pillars upon which societal self-maintenance rests; and it handicaps trade. The recognition of this fact, which is periodically verifiable, weakens in the mores the age-long prestige of war, and gives carrying-power to the assertions and arguments, however flimsy, advanced by the members of peace societies.

Everyone reads and speaks of the traits or virtues upon which civilization rests; and these represent, in a broad way, the adaptations in the mores to the artificialized environment. Yet a large part of what

is called the falsehood, hypocrisy, and conventionality of society is due to the attempts which are made to create an artificial environment. The denunciations of its defects are futile. The artificial environment is an expedient development. All such adjustments have the defects of their qualities.

As the form of competition under civilization becomes industrial rather than militaristic, there arises in the advanced society a set of mores consistent all along the line, which Spencer summed up under the term industrialism, as contrasted with militarism. The former is perhaps the broadest designation to cover the mores and institutions which represent adaptation to the artificialized environment; and a realization of the extent and consistency of development of industrialism under advancing civilization is, perhaps, the strongest element in a conviction that the mores are adaptive, that is, evolutionary. The rise of industrialism, depending as it does upon peace and settled order, would have been impossible and, even if possible, a case of maladaptation, in uncivilization; it is an adjustment to the artificialized environment, not to the natural, and is paralyzed and ruined where the supports of civilization give way under some catastrophe (earthquake, war) and the society is cast down into the primitive — irrespective of the question as to whether the structure may not thereafter be better built than it was before.

If we try to come down to the more concrete instances of adaptation in the mores of civilized peoples, we can no longer attain clear results by taking a nation or people for an example. Such a social unit comprises too many strata of civilization. The United States, for

example, though generally regarded as a nation, contains elements on all stages of culture. This is true in large measure of any unit which could be selected. Civilization is like the snow-line: it crosses all countries and nations horizontally. In a very real sense, the most highly cultured people of all lands have more in common — more mores in common — than do the cultured and the uncultured in any one geographical or ethnological unit. That, under pressure, the sense of unity falls back on the old lines, clinging to the essentials of group-identity and self-maintenance, detracts in no way from the truth of this proposition.

One of the chief results of the growth of civilization has been the development of the city. The unparalleled increase in the number of great cities and in the proportion of urban to rural population has been a characteristic feature of the last century. Numbers and the contact of numbers, the very conditions of the development of civilization, find here their acme. The modern great city is, physically at least, the most artificialized of environments. If grass and trees are to be found at all in the more densely populated sections, they are sedulously preserved in a sort of museum, the park. We need not dwell upon this point; a glance at the sky-line of New York City impresses it at once, when one puts aside the indifference of familiarity. And so it is proposed to use the modern great city as the best example at hand of the adaptation of the mores to an artificialized environment. To go into much detail would be to rehearse commonplaces known to many. The numerous studies of urban contrasted with rural conditions and life can be recalled by the reader, to

point by contrast and to amplify the few generalities to be cited here.

Self-maintenance in the city is attained very largely through an almost unvaried standardization and routine, which reduce the ordinary man, as is often remarked, to a mere cog in the social machine. It is complained that this is counterselective,¹ for it tends to remove the premium on intellect, initiative, and resourcefulness existing in more primitive conditions; but that leaves it none the less an adaptation, on the plane of societal selection.² As in a modern army, the activities are carried on group-wise, and the thinking is specialized; it is the inventor of the machine who does the thinking, and the captain of industry who lays out the campaign. For the competition is between such large bodies of industrial warriors that Indian tactics of individual attack are ineffective. Regrettable, perhaps, but inevitable.

Similar mass-organization is visible everywhere in self-maintenance: in housing, transportation, standardization of prices, protection of the market, and so on; and the ways of going and coming, eating and sleeping, show a response to this organization. Consider the dweller in an apartment, who travels miles every day, but who comes into contact with nature only in the most sporadic and distant manner; he moves in an artificial environment of materials, sounds, systems, and crowding fellow-men, and lives and secures self-realization as he fits into it and is part of it. Thus is developed a group of urban mores which are set off, as

¹ Schallmayer, *Vererbung und Auslese im Lebenslauf der Völker*, p. 122.

² Pp. 271 ff., above.

city ways, against country ways, a contrast which has often been brought out facetiously by picturing the adventures of the rustic in the city, or of the æsthete in the wilds. Daylight-saving is of the city; states where rural legislators are in control detest it. Urban mores are reflected with fidelity in the city newspapers; and the contrast with rural ways is brought out by cartoons and in items from country exchanges which are selected for their incongruity with the urban code.

The mores of the city are also more subject to acculturative influence, by reason of the fact that the city is at the crossways of lines of communication while the country districts remain in isolation. A foreign practice such as tipping secures a hold more quickly in such centers. Hence the city mores are "cosmopolitan." And even apart from acculturation, they are likely to show more variations, as numerous and antagonistic racial and social elements come into contact; they are less traditional and consequently less stable, but at the same time offer a busier field for selection. Hence what we call advance or progress is likely to appear in the urban code, where the rural may seem unprogressive or poorly adaptive. On the other hand, variations of the characteristic mode may be carried to such extremes, as in the exaggeration of mass-housing, that they evoke the ruder selective processes, operating through undernourishment, disease, and death.

It is not possible to catalogue the cases of adaptation to the artificialized environment as shown in the industrial organization. Labor conditions and those of capital show such adaptation. Wages, prices, and

rents reflect the peculiar life-conditions. The property-system develops refinements which are selected automatically or consciously out of numerous variations, as adaptive to the environment. In short, to use a classification employed above, production, consumption, and distribution are of a type unknown before the development of such aggregations of population.

The mores of societal self-gratification that are characteristic of the city are in striking contrast with those developed in a different physical and societal environment. Public amusement is highly organized and differentiated; in fact, the public place of amusement usurps for many the function of the home as a center of diversion and social intercourse. And it is noteworthy that these mores, spreading through imitation and assuming forms in harmony with the environment of adoption, approach the city code in differing degrees as the local environment approaches that of the great city. Imitations of New York life are laughable shams in isolated rustic communities, where they may be no more than premature and pretentious in a smaller city. Details of the urban mores of self-maintenance and self-gratification afford fuller evidence of their adaptive nature.

The code shows this adjustment also in what has to do with marriage and the family. Already has been cited the case of deferred marriage and the decline of the birth-rate of certain classes as representing adjustment by the whole society through its most sensitive part, the part most sensitive to considerations centering about the standard of living. The most highly equipped individuals, families, and classes show this

form of adaptation in a unique degree. The location of these, or their goal, is, in general, the city. And while statistics about the birth-rate in the big cities as compared with the less artificialized environments may prove little or nothing, it is certain, on general principles, that the former do not favor a rapid natural increase. The characteristic mode of city growth is by accretion — by addition rather than multiplication.

Urban living conditions impose everywhere a special type of domestic economy. The women are oftener wage-earners, and so, in some degree, are the children. Regarding the latter, the problem itself of how to raise children in a city is still before the urban community; a child is killed every day, it is reported, in the car-infested streets of New York; and the adequate adaptation is yet to come. For any but the wealthy, children must be reared in crowded spaces and in contact with influences that would not be deliberately chosen. The childless family has much less difficulty in securing living accommodations and domestic service; and, of course, it is those who have the foresight and a standard of living which they refuse to lower, who adapt themselves to this situation most readily. They practice if they do not talk much about "companionate" marriage. And if, in the artificialized environment, complicated and costly habits of self-gratification have developed, these enter to round out a standard of living which will be lowered only very reluctantly — a standard that could not exist under closer contact with nature. Such a status of the standard of living must inevitably affect the mores of societal self-perpetuation.

Aside from these very general considerations, if one gives consideration to the sex-mores and those of domestic life, he will find detailed instances of adaptation, called for by the nature of the artificialized environment, occurring to him all the time. The conditions of the association of young men and women which lead to courtship and marriage are almost as definitely set for them, by the general life-conditions, as they were for bundling. The qualities which are attractive in the sexes are not always, certainly, the same ones which obtain in less sophisticated communities; what is demanded of the woman in marriage is not that for which the rustic community calls. In short, the pre-conditions of marriage show adjustment of detail, if not of essence, to general life-conditions of the society.

Although satisfactory family life rests upon the same general basis everywhere, when it comes to its innumerable details, the domestic economy of the city-dwellers has its own peculiarities. Home is not a particular spot on the earth's surface, nor anything else that is material; it is an atmosphere. The character of the environment, however, is not by any means negligible, and the flat or cramped apartment is not the setting for the home that the imagination conjures up, nor yet the one which the memory of many recalls. It is often the mere lodging-house, and there is no real home at all.

"Not long ago, a home meant something. It was the location of our birth. It was the place where we entertained our friends and where we held our family functions. To-day we are born in hospitals, we entertain in our clubs, we eat in restaurants, we entertain our visiting friends in cabarets, and are buried from funeral

parlors.”¹ A social worker,² generalizing upon her experience, says that the interdependence of family members, and of families, for recreation has disappeared. The spelling-bee has been superseded by the scout-troup or roadhouse, and people have to go from two to forty miles to arrive at the scene of their pleasures. There is no tie to home and fireside, especially when the fire is a gas-log. There is no neighborhood standard of conduct. Parents do not understand children, as they once did, however little that was; for the children react to changed life-conditions. There is need of inner control in the family, as against so much outside influence. It is all a question of adjustment and the right choice of “technique.” Mr. Damrosch hopes that the radio, by keeping people at home, will save family life from disruption by the automobile.³

Narrow spaces and the proximity of families, again, introduce many an element of antagonism that makes a special call upon the patience, forbearance, discipline, and affection which go to make up the atmosphere that is the home. Such elements require adjustments in the domestic mores which are, in a sense, parallel to those called for in community life. Divorce, alienation, and sex-vice, where the above qualities are not present, also have their great-city type.

The letter of a religion adjusted to conditions of relative uncivilization stands less chance of preservation where it meets an environment widely differing from that of its origin. The city has the reputation of being more godless than lesser communities. Anachronistic elements are there more speedily shown to be misfits. For example, the life of the urban community depends upon the unintermittent activity of

¹ *N. Y. Times* (June 16, 1930).

² Owings, C., “Family Adjustment to the Demands of Community Life,” in *Journal of Social Hygiene*, XIV, 385 ff.

³ *N. Y. Times* (June 13, 1930).

its transportation-system; it could not cease from labor for one-seventh of the time, and not suffer. Several decades ago, even Connecticut had some, though scanty, railway service on Sunday. Compromise between the exact prescriptions of the religious code and the inexorable life-conditions occur all the time; they represent the adaptation of the former to the latter. Tolerance is the result of insight into the point of view of others; such insight is to be gained through close association with those whose standpoints are not ours; and this association is most likely to occur where numbers are brought into recurring contact in daily life, with a consequent broadening of the code along all lines, including those of religion. Religion is the sanction of the mores, and if the latter are altered to fit a typical environment, the former must at length change form to follow them.¹ There is much in the life of a great city which religion in its savage, traditional, or provincial form could not sanction.² The mores, however, go their way serenely without such sanction; and the alienation of the masses from the established forms of religion follows. The Bible reflects rural conditions, and, unless interpreted as something of wider reach than its own setting, cannot fit city life and its problems. The power thus to interpret religion is yet undeveloped in the ordinary expositor.

The apparatus of control and administration of great

¹ Sumner, on "Religion and the Mores," in *Collected Essays*, I ("War and Other Essays"), ch. V.

² There is also the reverse maladjustment, where the farmer must have his religion "in the terms of the twentieth century and in the terms of country life." In "The Churches that Ought to Die Are Dying," report of Country Church Board of the Presbyterian Church, in *N. Y. Times* (Nov. 5, 1916).

cities is yet following afar off upon their rapid material development; adjustment is still far from perfect. That there is coming into being a system of control which is quite different in degree and complexity from anything the world has yet seen, admits of no doubt. New situations arise so rapidly and suddenly that the existing regulative machinery is always strained beyond its capacity. Much of the time men are thrown back on chance and fall into grave errors; there has not been time to take in the whole situation and plan in a scientific, large-scale way to meet it.

The two issues in regulation (which are really one) are: the defining of spheres of rights for crowding individuals; and, more inclusively, the safeguarding of the society's life in the highly artificialized environment. Hence, on the one hand, rules for personal behavior that go into a detail uncalled for outside of a densely populated area; and, on the other, broad regulations and far-reaching provisions that scarcely visualize the individual at all. For example, take the traffic-rules of all varieties as a case of limitation of individual freedom of movement; and consider the building and fire codes as broad provisions for the welfare of community life. Everywhere it becomes necessary to resort to legislation, inspection, and enforcement; but everywhere at the same time are to be seen and felt the discomfort and pain of maladjustment. The common interests have multiplied so fast and are so complex, running through the whole length of the scale from small-group interests to class and racial interests, that experimentation and selective test have not been able to keep pace.

Parallels might be cited from other fields. As

automobiles have become more powerful and faster, it has been seen through sad experience that the regulations for running them have lagged behind. People have been thinking only of speed, and neither owners nor traffic-officials have really known the new vehicles or the conditions within which they must operate to secure safety. It has been largely an empirical matter. The case of the railroads was similar.

"We have only just reached the point where a few men are competent to manage great lines of railroad on their technical side; we have only just begun to educate men for the railroad business as a profession. Railroad men do not seem yet to have any code of right behavior or right management between themselves — people often deride the professional code of lawyers or doctors, but the value of such a code is seen if we take a case like the one before us, where a new profession has not yet developed a code. The social and economic questions raised by railroads and about railroads are extremely difficult and complicated; we have not, so far, accomplished much of anything toward solving them by experience or theory. The discussion, so far as it has yet gone, has shown only that we have the task yet before us and that, so far, all has been a struggle of various interests to use railroads for their own advantage. The true solution of the only proper legislative problem, *viz.* how to adjust all the interests so that no one of them can encroach upon the others, has scarcely been furthered at all. It is only necessary to take up a volume of the evidence taken by one of the Congressional committees on this subject, or any debate about it which has arisen in Congress, to see how true it is that conflicting interests are struggling for advantage over each other." ¹

Similarly with a great city; the need of adaptation to this novel environment has been so recent of development that it can as yet be met only in part. Old

¹ Sumner, W. G., in *Collected Essays*, III ("The Challenge of Facts and Other Essays"), p. 178 (written in 1887).

methods will not do ; instance the insufficiency of rural charity-organization in the big city. Naturally a passable adaptation is first achieved along the line of the maintenance-mores ; elsewhere in the societal field variation and experiment are rife and the most strenuous effort is being put forth to understand, and then to perform a successful selection.

“In the long last, the probabilities are that, instead of adjusting automobiles to the city as it is, the city will be adjusted to the automobiles as they are, either by increasing the number of streets or by providing special thoroughfares for them. That would be in line with what took place when the automobiles proved destructive to the macadamed roads that once were so highly regarded. It was not the cars that were banished, but the paving that was changed.”¹

In any case the code comes to include new elements and, even in its inadequacy and incompleteness, grows characteristic.

The immigrant peasant finds our urban standards of personal conduct oppressive and incomprehensible, and wonders if the eulogies of America as the land of the free are not overdone. It is wrong to peddle wares freely where one chooses, to control the time and activities of one's own children, to make such noises as one wishes, even to expectorate when and where one pleases. However, a species of half-adaptation, or adaptation by indirection, comes about, if one whose folkways transgress the code obtains a buffer in the form of a patron — ward-boss or other — who will for a consideration secure exemption or evasion for the culprit. And, indeed, where there are so many who adhere to alien codes, the prescriptions and taboos have to be enforced

¹ *N. Y. Times* (March 23, 1923).

indulgently for a time. City regulations often forbid practices which, normal in the rural environment, are both survivalistic and inexpedient in that of the big modern city. European peasants, settled in cities, may try to celebrate their harvest festivals in a thin and shadowy form; but they may not keep goats, chickens, and pigs in tenements. Gradually such survivals are eliminated, especially by the education of the next generation. But they are not wanting even in the regulative system itself; in American city government there is a persistence of the rural forms, giving opportunities for "graft," the "spoils system," and general inefficiency. The need of reform in the regulative organization of great cities is a topic of constant agitation.

Says an official¹ whose extended service in, and study of, city government give him a right to speak: "The plan gaining in favor in both States and cities is to follow the example of the nation, to confine the list of elective offices to those chosen for the broader business of government, and to concentrate in a single executive the responsibility for the appointment of the rest. The establishment of the 'short ballot' means nothing more or less than this. It is of the essence of common sense. To expect the voter, however high his intelligence, to choose with proper discrimination between a multitude of candidates for minor positions, when he has heard little or nothing about either the candidates or the positions, is to expect the impossible. Under cloak of this system, political organizations have been permitted for years to run in their unfit men with the fit, and thus capture offices that, though inconspicuous, are profitable from the political point of view. It is a necessary part of the complete reform of the electoral machinery of cities that an end be put to this practice."

Not all the regulations cited above are peculiar to the city; they arise in response to the need of adaptation to

¹ McAneny, G., in *N. Y. Times* (May 17, 1914).

a crowded and artificialized environment of which the great city is the extreme type. Settling one problem merely raises another. The community interest demands that costly enterprises in further developing the artificiality of the environment be carried out (sewage-systems, water-supply, rapid-transit); the population, having been taken care of in material respects, increases in number and demands; then less direct adjustments, such as the school system, civil service, election-reforms, and so on indefinitely, seem to fill the horizon. And so an enormous and complicated system of societal control evolves in response to the society's life-conditions, for which simpler communities felt little more need than does the Hottentot for a clearing-house.

This trio of illustrations of adaptation in the mores and in the institutions that crystallize out of them, on the part of three very differently situated human societies, seems sufficient at least to suggest many other and diverse cases of the same process. Such adaptation is the end-result of evolution. And so we can accept the conclusion, stated in advance of the evidence at the outset of Chapter IX, that every established and settled human institution is expedient, in its setting, as an adjustment.

The attempt has been made in the foregoing to show also that this end-result has been reached through the operation of factors essentially the same as those whose operation in the organic field leads to organic adaptation. We cannot demonstrate processes and results in the societal field with the precision and under the authority of verification which are characteristic of the

natural sciences ; for societal evolution is on a different plane, and the social sciences, in their different mode, have as yet no such equipment of evidence and method as have the natural sciences. One of the difficulties of the social sciences is, as appeared at the beginning of this study, that they have no evolutionary orientation such as Darwin gave to the natural sciences. The question was : Cannot some such orientation be given them by extending the evolutionary idea to the field which they cover ? This cannot be done, to any purpose, by "reasoning from analogy." But there is much more here than analogy ; and what is here has been found useful by some in securing an orientation for the study of human society.

APPENDIX

ON "ENERVATING FATALISM"

ANY theory which has about it even a whiff of determinism — that even glances askance at "free will" of the individual — that remotely hints at his insignificance in the Scheme of Things, becomes offensive to many. If it is said that society stubbornly chooses its own roads to salvation; if, with Goethe,¹ that the public is always wrong in detail, but never in the whole, that "humanity advances continually; man remains the same"; if it is stated that the "impossible" reparations, "impossible" frontiers, and "impossible" economic penalties of the late war have, as the nations have grown back toward health, been "automatically" modified into the reasonable and the possible; then someone rises to protest on the ground that the individual and his godlike reason have been traduced.

It might have been more politic, instead of talking about an "automatic process," to have poetically exhorted people to trust "the instincts and aspirations of the mass of the people in the passage perilous." That might mean, expressed in more honeyed words, what this book has been endeavoring to say. "Aspiration" sounds well; using it instead of, say, "personal and local interests," we might have gone on, rather loftily: "These aspirations are themselves a law, inexorable in its working, companioned by the

¹ Quoted in Ludwig, E., *Genius and Character*, p. 122; Dobschütz, *Christian Life in the Primitive Church*, p. 375

laws of human interdependence and of necessity for free consent, and revealing, so far as 'the groping search' of the historian extends, what seems to be, with all the perturbations, a law of moral progress."¹ Probably the writer quoted means about what is meant in this book, only he uses clever "verbal manifestations," quite vague and suave enough to disarm criticism. As a matter of fact, it would be still more politic to utter platitudes and pious hopes, as a number of scientists in other lines have done,² during complacent jaunts into the social field.

What follows,³ as will be seen, was occasioned by a criticism, or, rather, moral judgment, elicited by Spencer's attempt to show that there are social laws — and so, of course, that man, the individual, is under control and not "free."

Any man who undertakes to show that there are immutable laws in the life of human society — the only way to demonstrate science in any range — encounters a perennial objection. Herbert Spencer met it when he presented his system to George Eliot, a close friend, an emancipated spirit possessed of the keenest sort of mind, sophisticated, sincere, eager to know the truth. Her immediate response was that the social theory proposed must engender "an enervating fatalism."

This is what the inarticulate youth who catches a first glimpse of any such system tries to say. "If this is so, what's the use in trying to improve anything? What is to be will be, and that's the end of it. We should worry!" Older people, of the best intentions but not scientifically minded, seek

¹ "Law in History," editorial in *N. Y. Times* (March 23, 1924).

² Conklin, E. G., *The Direction of Human Evolution*. Burbank, Wallace, and even Darwin were led to expatiate outside their ranges of positive knowledge. Darwin rather apologizes for it. Darwin, F., *More Letters of Charles Darwin*, I, 326, quoted on p. 330, above.

³ Slightly adapted from Keller, A. G., "The Perils of Enlightenment," in *Yale Review*, XVII, 733 ff.

out chosen epithets for the disturber "who does not believe in progress and betterment"; especially is the phrase "*laissez-faire*" caught up, like a convenient half-brick, and launched conclusively at the offender. If such objectors were able to handle the mother tongue as the eminent essayist and novelist could, they would undoubtedly light upon her expression. Now, what is there in this "enervating fatalism"? Can new truth ever be dangerous? Are there perils of enlightenment?

If fatalism means inexorable preordination, it may well be enervating. Dante asks a certain supernal worthy how it is that the peoples of India, who have never had a chance at salvation, must be damned. He is arrogantly reminded that he is questioning a divine decree. All that had been arranged from the foundation of the earth. Well, what of the Hindu who has at length heard of his own sorry predestined plight and has believed it? He could not but be sadly dashed — enervated to anæmia. Probably no sane person has ever believed in utter predestination. Certainly Spencer did not, or he would not have taken honorable scars all over his body, and all through his life, in the struggle against entrenched and apparently invulnerable prepossession.

The truth of the matter is that science is not fatalistic at all; predestination is a dogma of theology. If society is presented as evolving automatically, under the action of irresistible impersonal forces, that is far from asserting that the individual can do nothing but lie down and submit. Never having been able to fathom what the metaphysicians mean by "free will" and "determinism," I shall use those terms, if at all, as one of the uninitiated; but it seems to me that individuals have a far wider and wiser freedom of choice under the recognition of reigning law and order than under the denial of such control. If it is fatalism that fathers enervation, I cannot see how acquaintance with

science can possibly be responsible for an "enervating fatalism." The phrase, however, has about it a preliminary plausibility; the freedom attainable solely under that knowledge of the truth which makes us free is not revealed to the superficial glance. The sources of liberty are not so obvious. There is every reason for taking a square look at the matter.

This charge against science, be it noted, does not concern itself with the truth of the results attained by science; the assertion is that such-and-such conclusions are productive of an undesirable state of mind and, inferentially, of inexpedient conduct — a slackening of self-discipline. There are plenty of people who would assent to the suppression of what they believe to be the truth for fear of its disturbing consequences.

Many an anxious, worthy man has fumbled after the expression that leaped to the tongue of the exceptionally gifted woman. He has feared for his more frivolous brethren, well knowing them prone to fasten upon any excuse for withdrawing foot from a steep and stony way. In view of their possible demoralization, what matter to him if truth were to be shaded or even suppressed? A little unscrupulous, of course; but fervent desire for a righteous outcome has led many a well-meaning soul to overlook the means. Similarly might an ardent spirit contend that the belief in hell fire ought to be kept up, or revived, in order to scare people — "common people," naturally — into being good. There is no warrant for denying that bogies have been efficacious in promoting socially desirable conduct. Primitive secret societies and medicine-men were specialists in frightening the vulgar herd into docility. The initiation of youths was an ordeal of discipline. And discipline has always been a requisite for social security. How it has been attained has been a matter of no moment at all. The suppression of a little truth — even its perversion — by those

who were keen on imposing the indispensable discipline has never caused them much qualm.

The fact is that whether we are to stick to the exact truth or not is a matter of custom and, behind that, of expediency. The proverb has it that the truth should not be spoken at all times; and anyone capable of reflection knows that we lie easily and with regularity, for courtesy's sake, if not for less, or more, cogent reasons. A lie, when conventionalized, strikes no one as a falsehood; it is merely an expedient device. Similarly with dissimulations and suppressions of the truth. Hence it is not so blameworthy that a green young man, or a mature and sophisticated woman, should harbor misgivings about the dissemination of views which, though admittedly founded solidly upon fact, might yet lead to moral enervation.

Foundation upon fact is assumed. If anyone believes that those are in error who hold that life in human society is controlled by impersonal forces acting in accord with changeless law, it is his privilege to combat that view on its merits; in the present instance the assumption is that criticism rests, not upon the grounds of error, but upon the basis of probable effect on conduct. I shall try to show that there is, in this case, no expediency in the suppression of truth — that this so-called "deterministic" theory issues, not in an enervating fatalism, but in an energizing clarification.

But, before coming to grips upon that proposition, we shall do well to review the lay of the land as respects the application of scientific method to the study of things social. In general, the education of the race has been such as to make against a genuine science of society; it is a matter of great difficulty to get people to understand what you are about when you are trying to deal with men and their institutions objectively. You seem always to be working against the grain, ever to be bucking some massive inertia. Your results are always being adjudged from the subjective point

of view, as somehow sordid, unworthy, dismal, unprogressive, not forward-looking, depressing, or even offensive. Epithets are your portion. You encounter a "will to disbelieve" which is rooted ultimately in vanity, though sturdily fostered by habit and custom. The human mind seems to revolt, as by some innate urge, against the idea of the gradual evolution of revered institutions out of humble and savage prototypes — just as it is repelled by the conception of animal descent. In short, your results are disliked because of your objectivity.

Objectivity is a prime attribute of scientific method; and another characteristic is the process of induction. The race, however, has been reared for ages upon deduction, dogma, guess-work, and that wishful thinking for which recently the term "thobbery" has been proposed. It is profoundly committed to the process of deduction from swelling major premises, themselves agreeable to the sense of vanity and personality — deduction of conclusions both bland and productive of individual and racial expansiveness. The wish has fathered a prodigious thought-progeny. Generation after generation has been trained upon revelation. Creeds have been constructed over which conventionalization has woven a cable-like insulation of quality so resistant as to render rational examination of them as ineffective as improper. The bulk of education still continues to foster this inveterate attitude of mind. Young people come up through the schools, encountering at every stage some one of the stock, untested, generally unverifiable dogmas of the race's childhood, to preserve which, if it is deemed indispensable, facts may be distorted or withheld.

One can readily sense these grooves of deduction up and down which the human mind has been taught to shuttle, if he tries to make exposition of conclusions arrived at inductively. Unless he produces and sets in array all his facts, which is generally impracticable, he will find his audience

assuming that he has "thought out" something "logically," and then assembled a few facts — his representative samples from a perhaps unwieldy collection — "to prove" his point. That is what his hearers are wont to do. And they will want to "argue" about his position, not to collect other facts and test it. They will make obeisance to a smart logical quibble, but they are not interested in a brute bulk of objective evidence. They want to skip the facts and "reason" about the theories. Each of them feels that he has a "natural right" to an opinion, just as he has to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness; that such a right has to be won in some way, by his own or somebody else's effort, is a conception so remote as to be below his horizon. There is no comprehension of the labor and the endless strain on judgment involved in the inductive process; it seems no more than a dull, plodding, boring drudgery. How much more inspiring is the brilliant generalization from a few experiences, or the swift snatch at a telling analogy. The defense of an *a priori* thesis is understood and appreciated; the scrupulous extraction of a little truth from a great body of observations seems to be small business, fit for grubbing intellects. The hypothesis is consistently confused with the guess.

Another anti-scientific element in the educational heritage is the exaltation of agency over cause. This arrives straight out of the hoariest past; the farther back you go in society's evolution, the less recognition do you find accorded to impersonal cause. This statement does not seem to demand demonstration; illustration will do. The action of the *Iliad* begins with a plague. Does anyone ask for the cause of the calamity? Is there any search for water pollution or infected parasites? Not at all. A prophet is summoned — even a dream-seer will do — to say which of the gods is angry. It is Apollo, who is taking vengeance for a petty slight by shooting lethal arrows from a silver bow. He

is readily pacified by reparation and atonement, entertainment and flattery, and the plague stops instantaneously. In a later age, the agency of woes is some heretic, or some helpless old woman whose toothless poverty has attracted to her a terrified attention, or some Jew whose opulent heathenism has incited to envy and cupidity.

Youths have been brought up to believe in the unlimited powers of the individual agent; they have not been called upon to note the impersonal cause. Their attention has been focused upon "who" did this and that, and they are summoned to hero-worship from their high-chairs, if not from their cradles. Through school they are plied with edifying tales, not necessarily true in fact, not to mention in inference and implication, about model individuals, their exhibitions of prowess and virtue, and their glorious, if ordinarily materialistic, rewards. Then the way leads on, it may be, through more sophisticated applications of the same great-man theory. College sounds the call to further hero-worship — and not seldom to a contempt for science as a preoccupation with the merely materialistic. Instructors in literature and the arts center largely upon the influence of personalities; in fact, not a little of their matter is laudatory biography, dramatically presented. They hammer in the Carlylean enthusiasms and objurgations; they cite an exhibition by Darwin of self-depreciation in order to show that science dulls the higher faculties. In particular has college imbued hosts of the youth with an uncritical reverence for individual authority, such as to preclude examination of the validity of that authority. College teaching thus becomes unworldly, in the sense of losing touch with life as lived; the word "academic" has come to cover some such impression made on the outside world.

In short, from the earliest years, young men and women are so trained — with no deliberate intent, in most cases, but because they are simply molded to the racial type — that

their minds are unreceptive to the idea of the action, within the social range, of impersonal forces operating in accordance with changeless law — law discoverable only by the laborious accumulation and painstaking interpretation of innumerable facts of observation. If, then, they encounter the scientific view, and are led to look into it by their own common sense and candor — for youth often reveals an appalling endowment of both these qualities — they are confused, disheartened, dislocated from a supposedly stable footing, shocked, disillusioned, disconcerted, demoralized. Then appears, they say, that "enervating fatalism." But it is evident that the fault, if fault there be, resides, not in the incorrectness of the deplorable views, nor yet in their inexpediency, but in the inappropriateness and inexpediency of previous prejudicial training. It is a case of human beings not having been equipped to meet and grapple with inevitably rising life-conditions — in this case, the development of science within the social range. Naturally such unforeseen circumstances are discouraging to the resourceless, and a sensation of helplessness and confusion ensues, which is temporarily demoralizing; but the challenging conditions cannot be set aside by ignoring or suppressing knowledge of them, nor yet conjured away by a feat of word-jugglery.

The youth of this age have got to meet the now rising revelations of social science as those of former epochs had to close with the new truths of astronomy and geology. It will do them no harm, though it may make them miserable for a while. It is not inexpedient that youth's unreflectingly and uncritically received stock of ideas shall be shaken up. The mind, like wet plaster, needs stirring or it will lose plasticity and solidify untimely. The unthinkingly accepted views of a sensitive intelligence will be challenged sooner or later by the experiences of life. It had better be sooner than later. As it is expedient that possible incompatibilities

of engaged couples shall be revealed prior to marriage, so is it well that intellectual maladjustments shall be sensed and rectified in formative years, while yet readjustment is relatively easy. Even though a few weak spirits remain demoralized by new truth, there is, in any case, no reason for denying stronger souls the boon of re-moralization. There is always some margin of human wastage attending every advance in culture. Nature has arranged it that the elderly generally become case-hardened. For them the process of readjustment, with few and impressive exceptions, would be truly agonizing, were it possible. But there is no apology for presenting to youth new verities acquired by thorough study, verified, and abundantly attested by fact — I do not speak of bright ideas or mystical revelations. The intellectual adviser to be feared is the egoistic enthusiast, eager to shock his public into recognition of himself — the one with the “message” and the fantastic pose.

The fact is that the stage is set against scientific method; and there is not a little concern about the expediency of proclaiming new truth conceived to be revolutionary of existing stability and intellectual comfort, and thus productive of confusion, loss of old landmarks, discouragement, and even recklessness.

We ought to realize, as a stabilizing consideration, that many of the truths we now hold as commonplaces would have paralyzed, and did paralyze, the moralists of a former day with panic fright. If, some centuries ago, anyone had broached the truth about the stars, the contemporary guardians of morals would have rushed to shut him off. What! Insinuate that the heavenly agencies do not determine human destiny? Assert that they pursue dogged, appointed courses through all eternity, in total disconnection with earthly life! Such doctrines must be pernicious, for they destroy faith. All must become fatalistic. Relaxation of morals must ensue. No one will cast horoscopes any

more. Weddings will take place hit-or-miss. Astrology, that lofty exercise, will be ruined, and revered star-gazers will lose their jobs. One might as well deny the philosopher's stone at once and challenge alchemy.

Galileo and Copernicus are names that recall the resistance against new truth that must upset the established order, throw minds into doubt, and morals and religion into disarray. Consider the "enervating fatalism" that must have attended the realization that the earth is round. No longer could one, in calm assurance, point to heaven or hell. He must have been infinitely worse off as respects disorientation than the youth who has come to doubt whether miracles ever occurred. Sanctions of conduct were slipping. Discipline could not but cease.

We know, however, that discipline has never ceased. It could not, and society still go on. It is the theory behind the discipline that has been ever subject to interpretation, modification, and displacement. Admittedly the rigor of the discipline in force has always seemed, at the time, to lose by any such tampering with the theory. There is good show of reason in the statement that social discipline has weakened with the decay of the ancient sanctions. Yet even he who could wish the days of superstitious fear back again must, however forebodingly, concede that he longs for what will never be. We have to go on and do the best we can under the changed conditions.

We have always done so; and not only that: we have eventually come, even the most conservative of us, to look with amusement or contempt upon the obsolete sanctions of conduct — those of evolution's yesterday. Witness the light esteem accorded, generally unintelligently, to the creeds and taboos of the "lower races." They can be shown to be much more efficient, in their setting, than many of those with which we insist upon replacing them; yet the very persons who are most intent upon resisting the disintegra-

tion of passing sanctions of conduct, among ourselves, are keenest to sweep those away which guarantee peace and order among the heathen.

Returning to our illustrations from astrology and alchemy — and we might add all the rest of those once highly esteemed beliefs cited by Andrew D. White, in successive chapters of his emancipating book on the warfare of science with theology in Christendom — we find now, except among the “superstitious,” nothing but disesteem for the, to us, ridiculous errors and fancies of the past, and for human survivals who still emit astrologic prophecies and advocate magic as against medicine. That is what we think of those sanctions of the past whose threatened passing filled the souls of preceding generations with fear of enervation and relaxation of moral fiber. We also assume that our sanctions are different and enduring, whereas the correct conclusion is, rather, that we are making other mistakes which will be shown up, later on, and visited with the same tolerant or intolerant contempt. This refers, naturally, to sanctions of ours which have been arrived at by the same process as those former ones; they have no stronger claim to permanence than their demoted predecessors.

A new process, however, has been evolved in later times. It is the process of science. Sanctions guaranteed by it are not so evanescent. I say a new process; it is not novel at all except in the conscious recognition of it. Men have always performed adjustments to the conditions of life that are seen, in retrospect, to be rational and expedient. The validity of many customs and institutions of the veriest savages is amazingly adequate, just as is that of the adjustments to be observed in nature. The reason for this is that the vast impersonal forces have always wrought out what is, in the end, expedient and rational. It is from the observation of their results, indeed, that we men derive our conception of rationality. Our understanding limps after the facts of life;

it does not precede them, as some fancy, like a pompous, directing drum-major, twirling an imperious baton.

But let us step aside and view this situation from yet another angle. A man would be considered a fool who fell into despair, enervated and fatalistic, because, haply, the sun spots were proved to be the factor determining weather. He might as well give up and let himself go in wickedness because the fall and winter inevitably come along as the sun withdraws, and he can do nothing to stop it. Such phenomena are taken to be matter of course — though once magic would have entered into them — and no one agonizes over them. People do not descend into vice because the components of a Seidlitz powder fizz when poured together and no inspired formula pronounced over them will prevent them from so behaving. No one becomes fatalistic or enervated over such eventualities. People conduct themselves accordingly — that is all. Again, it is only the half-mind that still hopes for perpetual motion. Most of us would as readily aspire to cause objects to fall upwards. We meet the inevitable with equanimity, or at least with resignation, and are not demoralized at all.

Further, we seek knowledge that we may the more happily fall in with permanent actualities. We go to the chemist who knows the laws and conditions, both immutable forever; we call in the physician. We realize that we have no "right to an opinion," when it comes to deciding whether the small boy has indigestion or a grumbling appendix. To say, in such cases, that one man's opinion is just as good as another's is conceded to be imbecile. In short, we recognize, without any heartburning at all, with no sense of fatalism and with no enervation, the existence of immutable laws; and we do our best to adjust to the recognized forces in the field. We are glad we know how to do that. It is the only sensible thing to do; experience has proved that, over and over again. By so doing we prosper, both individually and collectively.

It is in our folkways to assume that life is conditioned and controlled, and we are cheerful about it. In fact, we vaunt ourselves a great deal on the score of our knowledge of the ways of the inevitable. We even, somewhat swollen by our successes in adjustment, and taking counsel of our vanity, construe our cleverness in dodging and falling in with natural forces to be control over nature; but that is when we are thoughtless and not seriously candid.

In past centuries, our forebears could not have taken such an attitude towards all these matters. They were always seeking to direct their destinies through impossible attempts to control the uncontrollable. They knew agents that could be cajoled, as they thought — not causes to which no burnt offering or libation appeals. The distinction between them and us is that they had no science to speak of, while we are in possession of that incomparable instrument of adjustment to the conditions of life. That which has been so often resisted as inexpedient — systematized knowledge, “trained and organized common sense” — has come to be recognized as the boon of the race of men. Even those live by it who pose as despisers of its materiality — yes, and circulate their libellous preciosities by its aid.

The foregoing considerations refer only to the natural sciences; you can say of chemistry what you cannot of “political science” or “sociology.” There is no such tale to tell, when it comes to the social sciences. Men do not live by them, but, it sometimes seems, in spite of them. That is because they are not yet sciences in the sense of the physical sciences. In them the social counterpart of the perpetual motion expert and the circle-squarer pervades the range. Impossibilities are dreamed of and counted upon; wild schemes that seem to a practical man sheer lunacy are accorded credence and their authors acquire notoriety and a following. Inevitabilities are unrecognized. These branches are in about the status of astronomy while yet in the astrology

stage. They are raw and undisciplined, so much so, we are told, that any crank can fasten upon them from any angle. They lack precisely that which has conferred upon the natural sciences the trustworthiness upon which we rest with confidence. What chance have they of sometime attaining to a similar, deservedly favored position?

For the social sciences there is only one recourse: to follow the lead of their successful fellows. This can be done, at least to some extent, perhaps more fully as time passes. Of course, the main advantage of the natural sciences is that their results are verifiable — by anybody, in any place, at any time. Röntgen discovered the ray named after him; he told of it in print; and almost immediately physicists all over the world were testing the asserted result, not once alone, but as many times a day as they might wish. Laboratory experimentation cannot be hoped for in the social sciences; we may look wistfully in its direction, but we cannot enter that country. Yet we can be objective and we can cultivate the inductive method, if we are willing to practice self-discipline, conquer our disinclination for hard work, and renounce the equivocal glory of the bright idea, with its ensuing acclaim. In brief, we can adopt the approved methods of the natural sciences, in so far as they can be applied to societal phenomena.

This means considerable renunciation of immediate notoriety, recession from the limelight, less talking, and a great deal of quiet, humble, racking labor. It is like taking the vow of poverty. It is, in many cases, a choice of anonymity. Consider the thousands of careful observers, whose names are not emblazoned on the scrolls of fame, whose results constituted the building stones for a Darwinian synthesis. What some future Darwin of the social sciences will need, when his time comes, is just such records of faithful observation of smaller things, made by sincere, objectively working minds, willing to learn from the facts.

It may be that the social sciences will never come to deserve the name of "science"; but if they are to do so, there is but this one approved way and method. What is wanted is, of course, verification, over and over again, of social theories on the facts of life. Above all is required a certain austerity, a distance and detachment from the emotional, such as the natural scientist can readily win. Within the social range, these indispensables have to be worked for; they cannot be arrived at by the heated discussion of the contemporaneous. Feelings and interests — in particular, vested interests — are too intimately involved, when one tries to exercise judgment forthwith over contemporary matters. This we recognize in our admission that "the verdict of history" is the only trustworthy one. There is need of time to cool off before passing a dispassionate judgment. Otherwise the leap to the sweeping generalization and the panacea is too easy.

This subject is worth a volume. Suppose, now, that the social sciences should succeed, by the practice of objectivity and induction — the sole recourse, be it reiterated, which holds out any promise at all — in arriving at laws comparable with those of chemistry or physics: what would become of the "enervating fatalism" that is said to represent the response of many to the statement of such laws, or fragments of or approximations to laws, as we now know? The answer is easy. Men would act in the presence of such social laws with the same saving common sense which they exhibit when they confront the laws of the physical world; they would adjust to them cheerfully and unquestioningly, and would presently begin to plume themselves on having done so. To be on the edge of demoralization because of the demonstrated existence of immutable social law would appear as ridiculous as to lose all hope because π is always 3.1416 or thereabouts. And the "freedom of the will" would be seen to be, in this field, precisely what it is in relation to the physical world —

a chance to adapt to the inevitable with dexterity and surety based upon knowledge.

That is the only freedom there is — liberty under law. There is no danger whatever of an enervating fatalism in the presence of demonstrated regularity and order. It is rather the other way. Uncertainty and insecurity are what make men slaves. There is no use in trying very hard when you have no confidence about the stability of the conditions of life. There is nothing to reckon on. All is chance. To know the permanent conditions of living, in a degree comparable with knowledge of the predictable actions of chemical compounds, would mean confidence and hope; stimulation, not enervation; emancipation, not fatalism. The only straight road to "enervating fatalism" is to go on believing in snap judgments and revelations; for they are sure to fail, one after the other, until the most sanguine spirit, buffeted about by the winds of insubstantial doctrine, can conceive no longer of a safe footing or a place to rest.

NOTE

It will perhaps occur to some close student of Sumner's work that Sumner himself has written on "Evolution and the Mores" (see *Folkways*, preface, *ad fin.*). This is correct; and I feel that I must say something about that essay in this place. Some time before the publication of *Folkways*, Professor Sumner read, before a departmental club, a paper entitled, "The Application of the Notions of Evolution and Progress on the Superorganic Domain," in which he set forth his conviction that there is no progressive evolution in the folkways. This paper summarized, to some extent, a much longer manuscript on "Sociology and Evolution," the last passages of which I have quoted at the beginning of Chapter IX above. I think this was the projected chapter of *Folkways*, mentioned in the preface to that book.

At the club meeting which Sumner addressed there were present representatives of several other departments — biology, geology, psychology, history — and there ensued upon his paper a prolonged discussion from the different points of view represented. Several men then undertook, at succeeding meetings, to set forth their views on the subject. Sumner was present on all these occasions and listened to the criticism with his usual care. He also fought back lustily, as was his wont; but as we returned one evening from the last of these discussions, he told me that he had decided not to include the chapter on evolution and the mores in his forthcoming book. I judge from the unfinished character of the manuscript that he laid it aside at that time and did not return to it again. Other matters occupied his mind during

the last few years of his life; in the course of many conversations I do not recall any further reference to the topic.

This essay of his, as it seems to me, would be relevant and compelling if he could have completed it under the title "Progress and the Mores," or with the understanding that "evolution" connoted the process as Spencer saw it. Criticism of Sumner's utterance was confined chiefly to the position taken that evolution and progress are synonymous, or nearly so. Sumner admitted that he meant "progressive evolution" and endeavored to show that he was correct in viewing evolution as progress. As a refutation of much foolish talk about progress, some of the trenchant paragraphs of this essay should be very effective.

As for the systematic application to the folkways of the central idea of Darwinian evolution — adaptation to environment, secured through the operation of variation, selection, and transmission — I do not believe that it occurred to Sumner to undertake it. Often in *Folkways*, and even in much earlier writings, he uses some of the terms, as, for instance, variation and selection (*Folkways*, §§ 88, 170, *et passim*)¹; and frequently the operation of evolutionary factors, as developed above, is implied; but that was as far as he went. What he wanted to make clear was the origin and nature of the folkways; and then he meant to hasten back to his "Science of Society," rewrite in the light of *Folkways* what he had already written, and complete the treatise.

It is my belief that he would have been obliged to return to the topic of evolution in its relation to the folkways before he could have satisfied himself to go on with a "Science of Society." I have had to. No one could be more in sym-

¹ Upon a note sheet in Sumner's handwriting, one reads the following: "Progress is nothing but a readjustment to changed circumstances. Ideas, tastes, conditions, etc., having changed, there is pain. Readjustment, bringing satisfaction, counts as progress. Flourishing and happy periods occur when institutions, customs, ideas, tastes, etc., are in consonance with conditions."

pathy with his general way of looking at the science than I am; but I could not accept his views about evolution and the mores — views which were somewhat unsettled for him, I thought, by the discussions I have mentioned; and I came to the conviction that some understanding must be arrived at respecting societal evolution before it would be possible to complete a general book on the science of society that should rest upon the conception of the folkways.

This is what lies behind the statement in the preface that the present volume is an extension upon the idea of the folkways.

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